

**GAELIC IN PRIMARY EDUCATION: A STUDY OF THE  
DEVELOPMENT OF GAELIC BILINGUAL EDUCATION  
IN URBAN CONTEXTS**

by  
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**FOREWORD**

*i. In August 1985 two small-scale Gaelic Units were opened by Strathclyde and Highland Regional Councils, situated within urban primary schools in Glasgow and Inverness respectively. Their purpose was to develop the use of Gaelic as a medium of education for children to the majority of whom it is not the mother tongue - creating a new, protected and prestigious domain for the language in contexts where its speakers are nowadays scattered and its use almost entirely confined to isolated intra-familial exchange. Evidence suggests that the establishment of these Units has already had political, cultural and educational repercussions far in excess of their direct effect on the lives of the individual city-dwelling families involved.*

*ii. This thesis describes developments in Scottish Gaelic primary-school education during the period 1985 - 1989, places them in their historical, socio-linguistic and educational contexts, and attempts to extrapolate from the findings some pointers of practical utility for future development. Though due attention is paid to comparative evidence from other countries the central thesis is firmly rooted within Scottish experience, for the following reasons: (a) there has been a general dearth of recorded data relating specifically to Scottish Gaelic education, a situation which must be urgently addressed in support of present initiatives and to facilitate future development; and (b) circumstances have given the researcher access to unusually detailed local evidence, both longitudinal and latitudinal,*

prior to and during the period under discussion, as will be seen below (iii).

iii. Throughout the 1980's the researcher has been personally involved in the promotion of Gaelic in education - observing (and hopefully assisting) its progress from within as activist, teacher and, latterly, education officer. Such pragmatic experience has inevitably amplified the response to available published data, given direction and purpose to the research methods employed, and inspired further lines of enquiry since formally embarking on the research.

iv. The researcher trained and gained experience as a secondary school teacher in the 1960's, then, in preparation to embarking upon this study, attended a full-time Primary Conversion Course at Jordanhill College of Education, Glasgow. This provided invaluable theoretic and practical experience of modern methodology and classroom organisation, as did serving a teaching apprenticeship (1985-86) within Sir John Maxwell Primary, Glasgow, host school to the newly opened Gaelic Unit. Throughout 1986-88 (the first two years of the present part-time research) a close relationship was maintained with the Gaelic Unit, including regular service as supply teacher. Working closely with the children during this period allowed observation - informal but in depth (perhaps, one might argue, in greater depth than formal assessment procedures would have allowed) - of children's general progress since the inception of the Unit. It should nevertheless be noted that it is not within the remit of this thesis to assess the educational and/or linguistic success of this or any other Gaelic Unit, except in the most general terms: the close relationship with

*Sir John Maxwell Gaelic Unit might render objectivity difficult, if not impossible, for the foreseeable future.*

*v. At national level the researcher has gained first-hand experience of almost a decade of Gaelic initiatives as active Patron of Comhairle nan Sgoiltean Araich (the Gaelic Play-group Association) and, since 1988, in the full-time employ of Comunn na Gàidhlig (the official Gaelic language promotion agency) as Education Officer with a national remit covering all aspects of Gaelic education. The relationship with Sir John Maxwell Gaelic Unit has continued, though in less depth, and to it has been added access to similar Gaelic Units throughout Scotland, attendance at national primary Gaelic INSET courses, constant dialogue with parents, teachers, educationists and officials throughout Scotland and beyond, participation in planning-meetings concerned with inter-authority resource production, linguistic and educational philosophy and funding, and in meetings with parents, activists and officials to review present measures and extend their remit.*

*vi. Awareness of the international dimension was heightened and given focus by attendance (1986-87) of Glasgow University's Multicultural Education course and through the ongoing input provided by seminars and conferences on various aspects of education, language and culture - a process which has continued throughout the duration of the research period.*

*vii. Though much of the above experience cannot be used as an explicit source of specified data, its cumulative influence cannot be dismissed as wholly impressionistic or subjective for the purposes of this thesis: it*



is implicit within case-studies, personal observation and analysis, etc, amplified by published comparative and historical sources where appropriate. Further original evidence has been established using the following methods:

vii.i questionnaires: two separately designed and administered questionnaires were circulated and analysed as follows:

vii.i.i to Gaelic speakers and learners aged 16+ throughout Scotland, to establish their awareness of recent Gaelic initiatives and their attitudes towards them, and

vii.i.ii to the families of all children currently attending Gaelic Primary Units in Scotland, to establish the extent of linguistic usage and exposure in the child's present extra-mural environment

vii.ii interviews: in-depth personal interviews were conducted to establish detailed follow-up to data emerging from questionnaires; findings are both (a) incorporated into the text and (b) separately presented as case studies, both for descriptive and for comparative purposes. Although such data does not pretend to be scientifically controlled it contains much that is of interest, especially taken in conjunction with questionnaire results. Two different types of case-study are presented:

vii.ii.1 *school studies: using classroom observation, in conjunction with the comments of parents and practitioners involved in Gaelic-medium education, to define and illustrate key aspects of representative urban Gaelic Primary Units, contrasting these with observations made in rural situations and in Wales and Northern Ireland and*

viii.ii *family studies: using longitudinal observation, in conjunction with interviews with parents, to describe and illustrate educational affect in terms of the consumer.*

ix. *Thanks are due to many people, without whom this thesis would not have been possible, especially:*

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## CONTENTS

<i>1. Foreword.....</i>	<i>1.</i>
1. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW:	
1.1 Gaelic in Scotland.....	1
1.2 Gaelic in Education.....	29
2. LINGUISTIC BACKGROUND:	
2.1 Language teaching: historical overview (a) The rule of grammar.....	62
2.2 (b) Towards a more communicative approach.....	73
2.3 Communicative Language Teaching.....	92
2.4 Gaelic Teaching.....	101
2.5 Bilingual Education.....	112
3. GAELIC PRIMARY EDUCATION IN THE 1980's:	
3.1 General Background.....	145
3.2 Gaelic Primary Units in Scotland:	
3.2.1 Introduction.....	158
3.2.2 Sir John Maxwell Primary, Glasgow.....	159
3.2.3 Central Primary School, Inverness.....	186
3.2.4 Thumbnail sketches of ten Bilingual Units in Scotland.....	199
3.2.5 Conclusions.....	208
3.3 Children's linguistic experience outwith the school:	
3.3.1 Introduction and Global Frequencies.....	212
3.3.2 Comparison between Urban and Gàidhealtachd.....	234
3.4 Case Studies.....	269
4. POPULAR ATTITUDES TOWARDS GAELIC IN EDUCATION	
4.1ff Introductory.....	328
4.12 Summary and general discussion of findings.....	346

4.13	Discussion of findings: (a) Language and Culture.....	355
4.14	Results (a) Language and Culture.....	362
4.15	Discussion of findings: (b) Gaelic in pre-school education.....	368
4.16	Results (b) Pre-school.....	379
4.17	Discussion of findings: (c) Gaelic in primary education.....	383
4.18	Results (c) Primary education.....	392
4.19	Discussion of findings: (d) Gaelic in secondary education.....	397
4.20	Attitudes of educationists.....	405
4.21	Results (d) Secondary education.....	406
4.22	Discussion and findings: (f) educational constructs.....	410
4.23	General Summary.....	419
4.24	Respondents' Comments.....	422
5. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT.....		425
APPENDIX 1: Correspondence and questionnaire: "Children's extra-scholastic experience".....		433
APPENDIX 2: Correspondence and questionnaires (Gaelic and English): "Gaelic in Education: A Survey into Popular Attitudes".....		443
APPENDIX 3: Study Visit to Wales: A Report.....		499
APPENDIX 4: Study Visit to Northern Ireland: A Report.....		555
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....		577
APPENDIX 5: The Parent's Perspective: Transcript of a conference speech Sabhal Mór Ostaig, December 1987.....		603

## 1. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

*"'Tis in the past, sirs, lies our strength. In the present we have become hygienically emasculated and except for an occasional 'marag' or picturesque fracas are becoming indistinguishable from those regimented sinners of the wide outer world" (Morrison, Stornoway, n.d)*

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## 1.1 GAELIC IN SCOTLAND

1.1.1 The recent introduction of Gaelic-medium primary education programmes into mainstream local authority urban schools in Glasgow and Edinburgh (as well as in Inverness and, in the near future, Aberdeen) is significant in historic terms. It may be seen as a departure from the political policies of at least five hundred years (Dorian, 1981: 94n) - an acknowledgement by Scotland's most powerful and aspiring Regional authorities (both Labour-led)

1.1.1.1 (a) that Gaelic language and culture is of interest and relevance to the whole of Scotland, including its centres of administration and commerce, rather than to an ever-retreating rural heartland (Durkacz, 1983) and

1.1.1.2 (b) of the potential, in the late 20th century, of Gaelic/English bilingualism as an *additive* and *stable*, as opposed to *replacive* and *transitional*, phenomenon (Dorian, op cit: 94).

1.1.2 The historic interest of the urban Gaelic Units is further increased by the make-up of their clientèle. In each instance the Units were initially established in response to lobbying by predominantly Gaelic-speaking parental groups anxious to maintain their children's identity as Gaelic speakers and members of a discernible though scattered urban ethnic community. During this process, however, it became clear that the education offered in the Units was of interest to many non-Gaelic speaking parents: the latter now make up the higher proportion of participant parents in



urban-based Gaelic Units, as will be discussed fully in Section 3.3 (below).

1.1.3 The motivation of parents (and future parents) is of vital interest to planners in attempting to define the likely outcomes of bilingual programmes in terms of the expectations of the target group and potential functions for the pupils' bilingual skills; the long-term implications not only in terms of educational provision and resource, teacher training and supply, local community development, official or semi-official language policy etc but also in the wider terms of national Scottish identity: that is to say not only the *instrumental* but also the *sentimental* societal goals - even harder to evaluate systematically than usage, knowledge, attitudes, etc (Fishman, 1984: 46).

1.1.4 Data gathered during the course of the present study suggest that many parents feel a sense of dislocation (varying in the degree and manner of its conscious articulation) from their own cultural heritage: (a) generational/geographical - those with Gaelic-speaking ancestry and/or family relations and (b) historical - those with a sense that Gaelic is an integral part of Scottish culture to which they themselves have been denied access by accidents of history and educational policy as much as of geography and birth. It is impossible to predict how representative the latter feelings are of Scottish people at large: time, continuing political good-will and increasing accessibility will tell. But there are indications that the community-based approach to cultural regeneration preferred by most workers in the field (e.g. MacLeod, 1989: 228) may have to be re-examined as to its definition of the "Gaelic community" and the

nature of its operations within that community. Indeed, to an extent this is already happening (3.1, below).

1.1.5 The present chapter, therefore, seeks to trace the historic source of the present phenomenon by examining some of the accepted accounts of post-mediaeval Gaelic history. Of late these have convincingly depicted indigenous so-called "Highland" culture as the victim of a series of deliberately divisive policies designed to set Scot against Scot and alienate the Gaelic speaker from his own ethnic identity (Campbell, 1945; MacKinnon, 1974; Hechter, 1975; Dorian, 1981; Durkacz, 1983; Withers, 1984). It will argue that the modern English-speaking "Lowlander" is equally a victim of this process, whether or not he is aware of it, whether he expresses his "dislocation" in terms of informed regret or irrational antagonism. It will suggest that "general" Scottish historiography has tended to compound the process by its orientation and its implicit terms of reference (e.g. Mackie, 1969; Smout, 1986) and that some specialised accounts of Gaelic history, by reversing the orientation rather than seeking new terms of reference, run the risk of reinforcing, or even exaggerating, the dichotomies they seek to highlight. Some such accounts suffer another disadvantage: while acknowledging the importance of oral Gaelic tradition, they rely heavily on archival documentation - overwhelmingly English-medium, seldom written from the point of view of the subjects themselves (e.g. Withers, Durkacz, op cit); while recognising the colonial mind in action, they apparently do not recognise the hazards - practical (i.e. expository) and philosophical - in representing the viewpoint of the "victims" as though they were a single, homogenous group, a fairly inevitable result, one might argue, of writing the history of a

culture, a "consciousness" (MacInnes, 1982: 222) without preliminary in-depth study of the language which is its key. The Gaelic educationist is concerned with the creation of conditions in which the cultural development of Scottish children can best proceed in the present and into the future - which is unlikely to be achieved if one set of prejudicial half-truths is substituted by another. As MacInnes (1982, op cit) puts it:

1.1.5.1 "All history or rather all historiography is in a certain sense propaganda....Most of what has been written, it seems to me, about the history of the Highlands is governed, often quite subtly, by an 'imperial' idea. Nor is this confined to the period in which the Gaels served the British Empire. As we all know, there has been some reaction to that kind of historiography, especially in the last few years. But the reaction is still largely against economic imperialism, much less against cultural imperialism and the erosion of our identity as a distinctive people" (MacInnes, op cit: 223).

1.1.6 A radical re-alignment of historical perspective has long been overdue; it appears to have been developed in the main by observers at least one remove from Gaelic: Durkacz and Withers (op cit) both apparently derive at least their initial inspiration from a Scottish University which has no tradition of Celtic scholarship; Dorian, Hechter and MacKinnon (op cit) all operate from academic centres outwith Scotland, though the latter has acquired Gaelic through living within a Gaelic-speaking community. Dorian's own account of the origins of her long-term study ("Professor James Downer of the University of Michigan agreed to supervise a dissertation on an unlikely language" - op cit: xi) reinforces the

impression. Perhaps it is no accident. Personal experience confirms the view that "Scottish children are probably unique (apart from those in colonial countries) in learning more about the history, literature and culture of another nation than they do of their own" (AdCAS, 1989: 16). Highland history was classified by the researcher's youthful imagination as "definitely unimportant and probably untrue" through its study being confined solely to the optional Gaelic class (Gillies 1989a, in press) - a syndrome noted by Smolicz (1979):

1.1.6.1 "The ethnic group in command of the power structure can, and often does, monopolise most of the socialising and enculturating functions, which it uses *inter alia* to convince the minorities of their own cultural inferiority. The school performs this function by a policy of silence about some aspects of ethnic cultures and of active devaluation of their other components" (Smolicz, op cit: 4).

1.1.7 The Scottish Education Act of 1872, like its counterpart in England and Wales (1870), set the stage for a uniform, mono-culturalist approach by its concentration on the considerable administrative challenge - the implementation of compulsory elementary education for all regardless of geographical situation, ethnic background or socio-economic status - at the expense of properly addressing the cultural and pedagogic implications of standardisation (Smith, 1981: 48 - 49). Thus on the one hand the Act has been described as an important element in the wider European movement towards social and educational reform - devised specifically to break the chain-reaction of poverty, child labour and illiteracy in industrialised

society (*Smout, 1986: 95, 216*). On the other hand a Gaelic-speaking educationist has described it as having

1.1.7.1 "destroyed the movement towards Gaelic literacy....and produced generations of people, virtually illiterate in their own language and taught by the practice of the most pervasive institutions in their community that their culture was of no value" (*MacAulay, quoted MacKinnon, 1974: 54*).

1.1.8 Such conflicting interpretations would seem to confirm that bureaucratic decisions which serve (or seek to serve) the majority interest may fail to acknowledge the particular needs and traditions of minority communities; a process which *Smolicz (op cit)* describes as "the more or less systematically organised suppression of such traditions by a mono-ethnic state apparatus.....by the elimination of minority cultures from state-run and centrally controlled systems of education" (*Smolicz, op cit: 7*). In similar vein *Campbell (op cit)* has described the post-1872 period as "the bureaucratic phase" in the suppression of Gaelic. But the argument, if true for the culture of the north and north-west, must have equal application to the needs and traditions of all distinct communities within Scotland, indigenous as well as more recently established, and in turn to the variegated Scottish community within the English or "British" political monolith (*Grant, 1982: 3*). As regards Gaelic language and culture, academic research suggests that to confine practical regenerative effort to the residual present-day heartland (the far north and north-west) would be not only politically limiting but also historically unsound:

1.1.8.1 "The contribution of the more familiar 'western Gàidhealtachd' to the history and culture of Scotland may in some quarters have been sadly misunderstood and underrated, but it has never been in danger of being lost to sight. I would like to balance west with east by highlighting what I believe to have been the historically and culturally permanent contribution of Gaelic language and social organisation to the east of the country and the lowlands in general" (Barrow, 1989: 69)

1.1.9 It has been suggested that the concept of compulsory education made its first appearance in the Scottish Statute Book as early as 1494/6, in an "Education Act" aimed at educating to university level the heirs of "all barronis and frehaldaris that ar of substance" (quoted Cowper and Pickard, 1981: 109). The Act (designed to improve the quality of local justice - Smith, T.B., 1981: 206) was part of a battery of domestic policies which James IV promoted "with ferocious energy" (Wormald, 1981: 193). Mackie, (op cit: 122) describes James' measures as an attempt to form a system parallel to the English local judiciary - a parallel, however, which would seem of superficial application only. Smith (T.B., op cit) suggests that, for this period, external legal influences derived predominantly from Scotland's strong European links, English links having been largely repudiated after the Wars of Independence (ibid). Barrow (op cit: 73 - 74) points to long-established Celtic legal customs and practices still at the centre of Scots Law during and beyond the reign of James IV, notably the system of *assythement* (Wormald, cited Barrow, op cit: 73) a practice "in sharp contrast, one might say *conflict*, with the concept of crime as an offence against the state as it was strongly developed in twelfth- and

thirteenth-century England" (Barrow, op cit: 73). Indeed Smolicz (op cit: 7) has suggested that throughout the world legal systems deriving from English Common Law have formed a tacit basis for mono-culturalist attitudes - through the failure of Common Law to acknowledge, as does Roman Law, the concept of *nations or nationalities* - different cultural groups co-existing within, and without threat to, the *state* "as a unified political entity" (ibid).

1.1.10 Smolicz continues that the "identification of a state with one particular ethnic group" (ibid) may be so deep that it is taken for granted - "it constitutes part of our tacit social knowledge" (ibid). Thus James IV's domestic policies were designed "to strengthen central institutions against the forces of the periphery" (e.g. Smout, 1969: 102), a "periphery" whose differences the dominant viewpoint cannot help construing as unenlightenment, whose desire to *remain* different it is bound to interpret as implicit antagonism. From this vantage, assimilation of the parts seems justified (however regrettable) in order to achieve the stabilisation of the whole: viz "like all who have dealt with tribal society he (James IV) was confronted with the problem whether to use the clan or to suppress it" (Mackie, op cit: 121). Assuming mutual suspicion, the presence of Highland clans in James' army at Flodden *must* have been due to "the power of his (the king's) personality" (ibid) - a view very much at odds with MacInnes' "one of the recurrent themes of Gaelic poetry is loyalty to the king" (MacInnes, 1989: 98), or, again, "the sense of integrity of the kingdom of Scotland.....and a perception of the Lowlands as part of that integrated whole, emerges time and time again in Gaelic tradition" (MacInnes, op cit: 96).

1.1.11 Writers such as MacKay (1911), MacPhail (1914) and Thomson (1968) have suggested a stable, if not conservative model of Celtic culture in which the hereditary monopoly of highly-trained professional experts in the fields of history, poetry, music, law and medicine did not, (surviving oral tradition indicates), preclude the co-existence of a vibrant vernacular culture. But these and other more peaceful aspects of traditional Celtic mores are not the stuff of official parliamentary records or chauvinistic clan histories; consequently for writers who base their conclusions on such sources, "disorder" and "the Highlands" become virtually synonymous (as "disorder" and "Scotland" have tended to do within the wider context of "British" historiography). This applies equally to MacKenzie (1903), Gaelic speaking Lewisman commissioned by a Highland organisation to write the history of his own people, and to Smout, judicious social historian delivering a well-intentioned *tu quoque*:

1.1.11.1 "The Lowland plains of central Scotland were naturally more governable, but the fact that stories of feud and disorder in this region are generally less familiar should not mislead us into thinking that such things were very rare" (Smout, *op cit*: 104).

1.1.12 MacKinnon (*op cit*) is among those who suggest an alternative interpretation of the 1496 Act: that it ought to be seen as an implicitly anti-Gaelic measure - the first in a recurrent feature of Highland education: "that the formative years of the children of the leading citizens of Gaeldom were to be spent in an alien environment" (*op cit*: 31). There is little doubt of the application of this statement to subsequent history, or that James IV, aware of Edward IV of England's attempts to



"divide and rule" Scotland during his father's reign (cf the so-called "Treaty of Westminster-Ardtornish", 1462: Sellar, 1983: 157), conducted something of a witch-hunt against the residual Lordship of the Isles (Wormald, op cit). But this does not imply an attack on Gaelic culture *per se* - unless one assumes what Barrow has called a very "black and white" picture of 15th century Scotland: "this essentially mixed situation, quite the reverse of black and white, characterised in the later mediaeval period and in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the gradual disappearance of the eastern Gàidhealtachd" (Barrow, op cit: 69). It may also do less than justice to James IV - personification of "Scottish Renaissance man", with, apparently, wide-ranging interests, and some degree of competence in several languages, including Gaelic (Mackie, op cit: 119 - 120). MacKinnon (op cit) somewhat cautiously acknowledges that in pre-Reformation Scotland Gaelic "could be acceptable....as a language of learned cultivation outside its own boundaries" (op cit: 28 - 29), citing a rule of Aberdeen Grammar School (noted as late as 1553) whereby scholars were permitted to converse "in Latin, Greek, Hebrew or Gaelic but not English". But the writer's adopted stance does not predispose him to consider the exciting educational implications of this ruling (especially interesting within the terms of the present study), or conversely (if one is on the look-out for victims rather than multi-lingual educational models) to remark on the proscription of Middle Scots as "a language of learned cultivation".

1.1.13 MacKinnon (op cit 29) notes that "from about 1520 onwards the common Lowland speech came to be called 'Scots' and Gaelic identified as 'Irish'". However he does not make it clear where, or by whom this usage was adopted; hence his extrapolation that "thus the Gaelic language and its

speakers came to be regarded as in some way alien within their own nation" seems questionable, not least as regards its implication that written source material (especially official documentation) constitutes a reliable reflection of grassroots circumstances and attitudes. The same would seem true of Durkacz's assertion that the notoriously anti-Gaelic Statutes of Iona (1609) "yielded insight into Lowland attitudes towards Gaelic" (Durkacz, op cit: 5). It is instructive to compare such statements with Barrow's scholarly critique of John of Fordun's famous contrast (c. 1370) between the "decent", God-fearing English-speaking Scots and the slovenly, "savage" Gaelic speakers, "hostile to the English people and language, and owing to diversity of speech, even to their own nation" (Wither, op cit: 22):

1.1.13.1 "It goes against the grain for an historian to contradict first-hand evidence from some previous age, and it may be presumptuous on my part to suggest that John of Fordun's black-and-white simplicities must be modified. But the picture I derive from late mediaeval evidence is one of gradual change....a very gradual loss of Gaelic from much of Eastern Scotland" (Barrow, 1989: 79).

1.1.14 Barrow's thesis also calls into question MacKinnon's assertion (surprising in a book dedicated to "the original and continuing language of the Scottish people": op cit: frontispiece) that the Reformation removed "the one common cultural and symbolic institution shared by both ('Highland' and 'Lowland' Scotland): the Roman Catholic Church" (MacKinnon, op cit: 29). Durkacz (op cit) repeats MacKinnon's statement, adding that "after 1560 the Highlands, excepting Argyll, retained their allegiance to

Catholicism" (Durkacz, op cit: 4). This in turn suggests rigid sectarian dichotomies which oral sources paint in far more subtle shades - as indicated by Matheson, in an article about Bishop Carswell (from Kilmartin, and Gaelic translator, in 1567, of the Book of Common Order):

1.1.14.1 "Carswell's memory is not cherished in Argyll tradition, and for this three reasons have been alleged. The first is that he antagonised the old order of bards and seanchaidhs by his opposition to them as men who were stumbling blocks of the Reformed faith; secondly, that he was a zealous Reformer, and thus offensive to those who remained loyal to the old faith; and thirdly, that he was harsh and grasping in enforcing payment of the church teinds" (Matheson, 1956: 188).

1.1.15 We are fortunate to have in vernacular Gaelic verse a rich source of first-hand historic minutiae with which to leaven the lump of officialese. Duncan Bàn MacIntyre - borrowing a gun to fight for the Whigs at Falkirk (1745), limping home a few hours later as a muddy, gunless, and self-mocking Jacobite (MacLeod, 1952: 2ff) - confirms that "false syntheses and equally false antitheses" can arise from over-simplified equations:

1.1.15.1 "Thus, Protestant and Jacobite *must* be mutually exclusive terms; the 'Church in the Highlands' is synonymous with the main development of Presbyterianism post-1843 (with the implication that there is one smooth unbroken flow from the Reformation to the present day).... the Presbyterian clergy were always anti-Gaelic or opposed to

the arts; the MacDonalds of Glencoe could not possibly have been Protestants etc" (MacInnes, op cit: 230 - 231).

1.1.16 Similarly the "most passionately patriotic Gaelic poetry ever written" (Campbell, 1933: 34) was the work of Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair, who, immediately before his espousal of Catholicism and the Jacobite cause, was a teacher employed in the movement to reform "the situation of the Inhabitants" (of the Highlands):

1.1.16.1 "their ignorance, their Inclinations to follow the Customs, Fashions and Superstitions of their Forefathers, the number of Popish Emissaries in many places of these Countries" (Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair: 1741, quoted Campbell, op cit: 34).

1.1.17 There can be little doubt that proselytism and education - inextricably intertwined during and after the Reformation - conspired with constitutional politics in a sustained attempt to "civilise" (or "reform" or "educate" or "settle") the Gaelic-speaking areas from the Union of the Crowns (1603) until the mid-18th century - and that this process was perceived by definition as one of assimilation (Durkacz, op cit: 4 - 5). Even the most measured commentators have described the Education Acts of James VI and I as designed to bring about "the extirpation of Gaelic" (MacLeod, 1963: 307). The Act for the Settling of Parochial Schools (1616) had as its stated aim:

1.1.17.1 "that the vulgar Inglishe tounge be universallie plantit, and the Irishe language, which is one of the chief and principall causis

of the continewance of barbaritie and incivillitie amongis the inhabitantis of the Iles and Heylandis, may be abolishit and removit" (quoted MacKinnon, 1974: 35 - 36 et al).

1.1.18 MacLeod (1963, op cit) points out that neither this nor any of the subsequent 17th century attempts to "achieve conformity with Lowland standards and the suppression of Gaelic culture" made much impact "on formal education in the Highlands":

1.1.18.1 "The Highland parish was generally too extensive in area, and the population too widely distributed, for one school to be an effective educational unit" (MacLeod, 1963, op cit: 308)

1.1.19 MacKay (1991: 255 - 258) gives examples of the vain attempts of individual northern presbyteries to operate the system and concludes that the education of the poor remained largely ignored (ibid: 259). However it is interesting to speculate the extent to which the education of Gaelic-speaking children in these areas actually suffered through largely depending, as it always had done, on oral learning: "that informal type of education which has a separate history of development and for centuries was of far greater importance to Gaelic than the formal development (Smith, 1981, op cit: 2 - 3). Claims that Knox's *First Book of Discipline* "has served as an ideal for Scottish education ever since" (Cowper and Pickard, op cit: 109) should perhaps be set against recent reassessments of the parish school system in operation - e.g:

1.1.19.1 "For every one who succeeded, there were hundreds who left school with basic literacy, knowledge of the Bible and the Shorter Catechism and not much else.....schooling was not always a liberating experience....(schools were) severely under-equipped, badly under-funded and poorly staffed....its range was limited....the creative and physical aspects suffered relative neglect; authoritarian pedagogy of the classroom, the often brutal discipline....obsession with formal examinations, and the frequent joylessness which the Calvinist ethic often visited upon education etc etc" (AdCAS, 1989: 4; 7).

1.1.20 If we are looking for "victims" it seems unsound to apply our reconstructive imagination less diligently to parts of Scotland which we now classify as "Lowland" but where common Celtic origins were irrevocably, to use Barrow's phrase, "lost to sight" (op cit, above: 1.1.8.1) after the Reformation, whether these were, at the time, still outwardly manifested in Gaelic usage or whether, by then, in what MacColla (1975: 20) calls "a 'something at the back' of all our minds, which we all knew but could not express". The terms whereby Knox's scheme was to be implemented were high-handed and uncompromising:

1.1.20.1 "Item, that all scolis, alsweill to burgh as to land, and collegis be reformat, and that nane be permittit nor admittit to haif chairge thairrof, or to instruct the youth privatlie or publictlie bot sic as ar or sal be tryit be the Superintendentis and visitatoris of the Kirk, and admittit be thaim to thair chairgis" (Commission of the Articles, 1567, quoted Mackenzie, 1948: 61).

1.1.21 We gain insight into the immediate plight of recalcitrant educationists from a pamphlet written by Ninian Winzet, former Rector of the Parish School of Linlithgow, who was "expellit and schot out of that my kindlie toun" for refusing to accept the Confession of Faith (MacKenzie, *op cit*: 62): "I wes penseand how happy ane thing it wes gif everie man might leve according to his vocation, at ane tranquillitie in godliness" (*ibid*). Winzet narrowly escaped arrest for publishing such sedition, fled to the Sorbonne and died Abbot of the Scots Benedictines at Ratisbon (*ibid*), presumably one of the many who "recognised that their native country was not a congenial home for them and kept themselves in the ampler ether of continental life" (Edgar, 1893, quoted Ritchie, *n.d*: 9; cf also Dilworth, 1965 for discussion of the contribution of exiled Scots clerics to European ecclesiastical life after the Reformation).

1.1.22 MacKay (*op cit*: 250ff) gives us insight into something of what was lost by the summary break with a venerable educational tradition, with Celtic origins and strong European links. Perhaps most significantly he gives evidence to suggest that the religious establishments had been, at least to some extent, instrumental in educating the poor (*op cit*: 252), a point confirmed by other writers: e.g. "the ancient Church.....diligently promoted our national education - an education placed within the reach of all classes" (Grant, 1876, quoted Ritchie, *ibid*). Knox's vision of 'education for all' was over three hundred years in coming to fruition, when it finally became obvious that "the state must accept the final responsibility for the required expansion in education" (Smith, *op cit*: 10). In the immediate post-Reformation period existent grammar schools

flourished and gained from forfeit Catholic patrimonies (MacKay, op cit: 253) while, Smout suggests, most ordinary children in all parts of Scotland were worse off educationally than they had been before (Smout, op cit: 87). The educational experience of James Melville (quoted MacKenzie, op cit: 58 - 59) illustrates the precarious nature of provision, where the underpaid minister (Mackie, op cit: 160) was, all too often, forced willy-nilly to take on the rôle of dominie (Smout, op cit: 87). Melville's school-days were:

1.1.22.1 "a happie and goldin tyme inded, gif our negligence and unthankfulness haid nocht movit God to shorten it, pairtlie be decaying of the nombir, quhilk caused the minister to wearie, and pairtlie of a pest quhilk the Lord, for sin and contempt of His Gospel, send upoun Montrose, distant from Over Logie bot twa mylis; sa that school skailit, and we wer al sent for and brocht hame" (MacKenzie, op cit: 58 -59).

1.1.23 Campbell suggests that "during the two hundred years after 1560, and especially after the time of the Union of the Crowns, the persecution of Gaelic cannot be separated from the persecution of Catholicism in the Highlands" (Campbell, 1945: 41). Campbell's "notable pioneer work" (Dunn and Robertson, 1989: 44) was written at a time when Gaelic was at a parlously low ebb. Pre-War Census figures had painted a gloomy picture of the situation of the spoken language (Withers, op cit: 253) and were likely to have further deteriorated as a result of heavily disproportionate war losses among Gaelic-speaking communities. MacLean (1959), intimately acquainted with the Gaelic-speaking population in the post-War period



through his extensive field-work as a collector of folk material, describes morale at the time:

1.1.23.1 "That there is widespread devotion to the language throughout the Highlands is beyond all doubt, but it is not the enthusiasm of zealots whipped up by propaganda, for there is no effective propaganda; it is the spontaneous devotion of a disinterested but unfortunately inarticulate mass to something they feel is a very vital part of their spiritual lives. That there has been no dynamic urge to rehabilitate the Gaelic language is not due to lack of devotion but to the lack of leadership" (MacLean, op cit: 90).

1.1.24 But the war had salutary effects in terms of general public awareness, as Campbell points out, quoting a BBC broadcast by Sir Walter Layton:

1.1.24.1 "This war will have been fought in vain unless certain democratic rights are established throughout Europe, including freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of worship.....and of the rights of minorities to use their mother tongue" (Layton, 1944: 568, quoted Campbell, op cit).

1.1.25 A change of official attitude towards Gaelic, however, would be unlikely while the general public, including the Gaelic minority, remained uninformed of their own history. As Campbell says (op cit: 9), "some of the details of this persecution.....surprised the writer and may also surprise many readers, for they are usually ignored by Scottish historians". The

present thesis would argue that awareness of this process be widened to embrace the long-term cultural losses sustained by parts of Scotland less insulated from the effects of centralised religious - and erosive linguistic or cultural - change. During the reign of James VI many of the Gaelic speakers "that dwelleth in our mainland that are barbarous for the most part, and yet mixed with some show of civility" (James VI, 1599, quoted MacKinnon, op cit: 33) lived well outwith the "Iles and Heylandis" as nowadays perceived. Thus Sir Thomas Craig, "the learned Scottish lawyer and statesman of the reign of James VI" (MacColla, 1975: 60) writes "in joyous celebration" of the success of attacks against the Gaelic language in what is nowadays termed Scotland's "central belt" (ibid):

1.1.25.1 "I myself remember the time when the inhabitants of the shires of Stirling and Dumbarton spoke pure Gaelic. But nowadays one rarely comes upon any who speak it" (quoted MacColla, op cit).

1.1.26 Even Craig seems somewhat to have under-estimated the tenacity of the Gaelic language even in such accessible "Lowland" areas: in 1699 the General Assembly states, in an *Act Anent Planting of the Highlands*, that

1.1.26.1 "the Presbyteries of Dumbarton, Dumblain, Inverness, Abernethy, Aberloure, Tain, Dingwall, Dornock and Caithness; are hereby enjoined, to have Bursers, who have the Irish language etc" (quoted Campbell, 1945: 48).

1.1.27 In other words the "barbarous" practice of speaking Gaelic was still wide-spread enough to merit the attentions of the Assembly "from

twenty miles or so west of Edinburgh and all the way to within sight of Glasgow" (MacColla, op cit) at the beginning of the 18th century, the period which Withers (op cit: 182) describes in terms of migrant "Gaelic communities in the Lowlands", established while "the language was declining in the Gàidhealtachd proper" (sic). Thomson (1976: 4 - 5) cites the continued, albeit declining, co-existence of Gaelic and English in such "improper" places as Galloway and Carrick, Angus, Donside and Deeside - in some cases even into the present century - in support of his "case for a more sustained and conscious support by Government of the Gaelic cultural minority".

1.1.28 Grant (1982) talks of a "crisis of identity in Scottish education", elsewhere described as "the need to define a common core of shared knowledge which is rightly the property of all Scots and to teach that in the context....of a plural society at home and the wider international community of which we are inevitably part" (AdCAS, op cit: 17). It would seem plausible that, if such a need does indeed pertain - the "something at the back of the mind" (MacColla, op cit) - historical language loss has played a significant contributory rôle. Thus Gillies (1930: 88) suggests that "a debt is due to the Gaelic language for retaining memories of our older freer institutions"; similarly MacAoidh (1907: 9) writes

1.1.28.1 "without a language there is nothing to connect us with the past.....Although we may cease to be Scottish we can never be wholly English, but will remain a mongrel people".

1.1.29 Thomson (op cit: 5), however, suggests that "the national conscience is not clear on this issue". The Scottish National Party acknowledges Gaelic as "a living part of our heritage" which should be recognised, along with English and Scots, as "official languages in an independent Scotland" (SNP, 1987); but Macillechiar contrasts the "ambiguous" attitudes of Scottish nationalists in general with those of activists involved in similar European movements:

1.1.29.1 "Since the basis of their nationalism was the restoration and development of their nation's culture, they rejected the use of the imperialist language except when required as a propagandist tool (as I use English now), and wrote mainly and creatively in their native language. The majority of these nationalists were middle class, and as such learned as children only the imperialist tongue. A conscious effort had to be made later in life to learn the native language" (Macillechiar, 1985: 41).

1.1.30 Brand (1978: 14 - 15) gives instances of "the central part that language has played in the extension of political nationalism" - citing Nynorsk, Czech and Hebrew as examples of national languages resuscitated, or even created, for political reasons (cf also Ellis and Mac a' Ghobhainn, 1971) but adds that "for the vast majority of Scottish nationalists the language issue hardly existed":

1.1.30.1 "They might be happy that they spoke with a Scots accent. The more literate might encourage the study of Scottish poetry as a school subject. They would demand that Gaelic should be given an equal

place with English in the rapidly diminishing areas where Gaelic was still spoken. On the other hand there was no concentrated effort to develop the language as the badge of the nation" (Brand, op cit: 15).

1.1.31 Thus official arguments for the promotion of Gaelic education today tend to avoid reference to the language in terms of a national Scottish institution, and reflect, rather, the pressures exerted by what Grant delicately calls "the ambiguous relationship between our system and others in the UK":

1.1.31.1 "With a distinctive bureaucracy (for most of the system) but no political control over it, Scottish education is subject to powerful relationships (and attitudes) that are, to say the least, highly ambivalent" (Grant, 1982: 3).

1.1.32 This may be exemplified by a measured statement from a sympathetic representative of Strathclyde - the Region containing the highest number of recorded Gaelic speakers (actual, though not proportionate to total population) according to the 1981 census (Grandd, 1983: 13).

1.1.32.1 "Strathclyde as an authority is very keen on languages. And Gaelic is treated no differently from Spanish or any other S-grade language. The language drive is going ahead within the framework of a curricular programme based on the principle of multi-cultural awareness. I have the same involvement in developing Urdu, Punjabi and Chinese" ("*Times Educational Supplement*", 28.4.89).

1.1.33 At the other end of the spectrum it is still not altogether a rarity to find the non-racial editorial policies of the Scottish national press failing to extend to Gaelic within Scotland:

1.1.33.1 "Less than 2% of the population speaks this virtually unusable language, historically equated with feuds and bloodshed, squalor, dreary whisky drunks and oppressive religious doctrine. Perish the thought that a language associated with such a culture will continue to be propped up for the edification of future generations" (Letter Page, "*Glasgow Herald*", 16.7.89).

1.1.34 Macillechiar (op cit) seeks to explicate Scottish "ambivalence" towards Gaelic in terms of "a deep psychological folk-guilt of repression, abandonment and denial". Certainly letters such as the above seem to suggest some deep-seated, irrational factor. However Macillechiar's appeal to his readers to learn Gaelic in order to "exorcise" their shared "guilt" (ibid) seems an unsound basis upon which to build rational future development. If Gaelic is to be seen as a national, rather than a local issue then the present-day "Lowland" Scot must be seen as the victim, rather than the guilty perpetrator, of the same social and political processes which have been cited as alienating the Gaelic-speaker from his own language and culture (cf MacKinnon, 1972, op cit: 383). Thus the "apathetic" (or "repressed, or "abandoned") "Highlander" and the "hostile" (or "apologetic" or "ambivalent") Lowlander would seem to be syndromes which require the same radical and sympathetic re-examination.

1.1.35 Indeed it has been argued that Gaelic activists have themselves been equally ambivalent, equally inclined to concentrate their efforts on pressing the rights of the residual Gaelic-speaking population at the expense, perhaps, of the wider cultural dimension. Writing in the Dundee Highland Society Year-book, MacLeod (1919: 2) describes the Gaelic Movement as "a national movement", but indicates that his feelings are not necessarily representative:

1.1.35.1 "the recognition of the national rights of little nations, and the pervading sense of justice that must be inseparable from these and that gives them inspiration, should have enabled those in authority in the movement to have kept the Gaelic torch burning; should indeed have made those considerations a fuel to its fire. Why this has not been done will be for history to proclaim".

1.1.36 The contrast is obvious between Scotland and, for instance, Wales - where the Welsh language movement, while recognising the importance of the "heartland", has always maintained a national dimension. In Scotland such arguments have been the exception rather than the rule:

1.1.36.1 "the idea of confining the language movement to one part of the country - and that the most sparsely populated - is woefully short-sighted and tends to increase difficulties already sufficiently numerous....Our aim should be to hasten the day when the cities and towns of the south shall take an active part in this great work" (Clark, 1927).

1.1.37 By 1976 the process seemed irreversible, with the publication of a proposal for the partition of Scotland as "the first practical step in introducing Gaelic as an official language" - the only apparent method of restoring Gaelic diglossia:

1.1.37.1 "to divide the country into North and South Regions, the North being divided into a fully "Gaelic" Outer Isles, with the Highland Region and the Argyll District of Strathclyde occupying an intermediate position" (MacLeod, 1976: 25).

1.1.38 The developments of the past decade render this proposition ironic - but equally it would seem to find little justification within Gaelic tradition itself, though some writers have seemed determined to prove otherwise. Thus Dorian (op cit) acknowledges that "the cultural differences (between 'Highlander' and 'Lowlander') were not always so great as has been supposed", but continues:

1.1.38.1 "If there were neither sharp racial lines nor total cultural distinctiveness, what did separate Highlander and Lowlander so deeply? Nicholson reminds us that *myths* of racial origin are as important as actual origin, and that the Gaels regarded the Lowlanders as of different blood (1968: 5)" (Dorian op cit: 17).

1.1.39 MacInnes (1989) finds no evidence to support such a claim within Gaelic tradition, citing Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair, the eighteenth century Gaelic poet who coined the phrase "Mìorùn mòr nan Gall" ("*the great animosity of the Lowlander*") in reaction to "the whole attack on Gaelic



culture" (MacInnes, 1986: 96). The phrase has been quoted often by recent commentators (e.g. MacKinnon, 1974: 30; Withers, 1984: 113), and, out of context, it would seem to indicate mutual hostility. However the line occurs in the context of a poem in which Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair "celebrates Gaelic as the ancient language of Scotland" (MacInnes, op cit: 96):

1.1.39.1 "Mhair i fòs is cha teid a glòir air chall

A dh'aindeoin gò is micrùn mòr nan Gali

"Is i labhair Alba is galibhodaich fhèin

Ar flaith, ar prionnsaidhe is ar diucanna gun éis

"Is i labhair Goill is Gàidheil, neo-chleirich is clèir

Gach fear is bean a ghluaiseadh teanga am beul"

(Watson, 1959: 99)

*("It has always prevailed, and its sound will not be lost despite the deceit and great animosity of the Gall. It is the speech of Scotland and of Lowland carles, of our aristocracy, our princes and dukes...It is the language of Gall and Gael, layman and clergy, every man and woman who moved tongue in mouth")*

1.1.40 MacInnes (op cit: 97) continues by pointing to Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair's "Aiseirigh na Sean-chànain Albannaich" ("The Renaissance of the

Ancient Scottish Language"), whose preface is directed specifically to "the inhabitants of the Lowlands of Scotland":

1.1.40.1 "Once again the integrating principle is a sense of the Gaelic basis of Scotland. Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair is encouraging the Scots of the Lowlands to take an interest in their Gaelic heritage" (MacInnes, 1989, op cit: 97).

1.1.41 It seems that the 18th century poet may have been aware that "animosity" may derive from lack of knowledge and a sense of being excluded from an important element of cultural identity. Perhaps it is not unduly whimsical to suggest that the opportunity to re-enter that lost world is now being offered to "Lowland" people through their children's attendance of Gaelic Units. Perhaps most importantly, this is being achieved in an entirely democratic and peaceful fashion - by responding to the wishes of ordinary parents with no common political or sectarian axe to grind other than their desire to find expression for a hitherto unfocused sense of Scottish ethnicity.

## 1.2 GAELIC IN EDUCATION

1.2.1 The establishment of urban Gaelic Units has historical significance at another level: it acknowledges the viability of Gaelic as a medium of education across all areas of the primary school curriculum and its potential for future development in the secondary curriculum, for children to the majority of whom it is a second language. Previously the major - almost the only - priority of Gaelic educationists was improving the status of the language in mainstream provision within the residual linguistic heartland (MacLeod, 1963: 305) and the decline of the language was seen as inevitable even within that heartland (ibid).

1.2.1.1 "We are concerned not so much with the survival of a language but with making adequate and appropriate educational provision for a small but important section of the school population, whose first language is Gaelic and who, small in number as they undoubtedly are, are entitled to what is the right of school children almost everywhere, to be educated to some extent at least in the language which they understand best" (MacLeod, op cit: 306).

1.2.2 Pioneering local authority officers such as MacLeod were not without support at national level during this period. The EIS had made its views public as early as 1879 (1.2.33.1, below); research into the extent and nature of Gaelic teaching practice had been conducted by *An Comunn Gaidhealach*, the voluntary Gaelic organisation, before the outbreak of the Second World War (*An Comunn Gàidhealach*, 1936); the *Scottish Council for Research in Education* investigated the effects of Gaelic-English

bilingualism on standard IQ test results (Smith, C., 1948) - an area of enquiry amplified and developed in the light of cognitive psychological advance during the 1960's (MacLeod, F., 1969); ten years later SCRE conducted school surveys, concluding that "the position of Gaelic in the Highland community is far worse than it was as revealed by the 1951 census" (SCRE 1961: 63) and recommending that schools be used as "a *conscious* instrument" for language maintenance". Grassroots activism, informal professional consultation and voluntary youth development work culminated in national conferences, under the convenership of the Glasgow Provincial Committee for the Training of Teachers: here Gaelic-speaking practitioners gained an opportunity to voice their own opinions and find common ground (An Gàidheal, 1.1, 1956; 1.11, 1957; 1.111, 1958). The consensus of practitioners, researchers and campaigners was that "the Gaelic problem" merited "a genuine bilingual approach....with a renewed emphasis on the primary school and the creation of teaching materials in Gaelic" (Smith, J A 1981: 64). Smith (ibid: 62) points out that the "child-centred" approach to teaching recommended by the 1945 Education Act could not but be of direct benefit to bilingual children. MacLeod (M, 1963, op cit: 325) suggests that by 1963 "the Scottish Education Department's attitude has shown a steady and significant change during recent years". This seems confirmed by SED reports (notably "The primary School in Scotland" and "Junior Secondary Education": Scottish Education Department, 1965 and 1955 respectively) which, as Smith (J A 1981: 63) puts it "reveal a sympathy and understanding for children in a bilingual situation which are far in advance of previous references (if any) to the subject in such official sources...it is somewhat sad and exasperating to think that it took almost a hundred years to create this change in public and official attitude".

1.2.3 Dunn and Robertson (1989: 44) suggest that, although there is as yet no definitive historical account of Gaelic education, they have reason to suspect that "active discouragement and neglect" has typified "the official system's attitude to Gaelic since the inception of State education in 1872" (ibid). They quote representatives of the SED who in 1981 described the Department's attitude towards bilingual education as one of "benevolent neutrality". But "in circumstances like those of Gaelic neutrality cannot be benevolent" (ibid). This chapter, therefore, seeks to examine the rôle of formal education in Gaelic history, both before and after the 1872 Education Act, placing this within a context of some of the other issues which may have contributed to the decline of the language (Durkacz, op cit: 216).

1.2.4 Throughout Scotland the evangelical function of education was its most obvious characteristic during the three centuries following the Reformation - particularly as regards the spread of literacy among "peasant" or "working-class" children (Smout, 87ff). Long after its initial proselytising purpose had given way to a more general "civilising" or enculturating function, the period of Church ascendancy in Scotland was discernible like a palimpsest beneath educational philosophy - the spirit of John Knox, who held, Smout suggests, "the thoroughly Protestant view that children were born wicked" (Smout, 1969: 450) and believed "(the words are those of an eighteenth century presbytery) that the business of education was to prepare children 'for the business of life and the purpose of eternity'" (ibid).

1.2.5 In terms of economic philosophy the twinning of worldly "business" and other-worldly "purpose" is the basis for a theory linking Calvinism and the rise of European capitalism (Weber, 1967). It has been suggested that the collective democracy which typified the Kirk session may have militated against the emergence of "economic individualism" in Scotland (Smut, op cit: 95): "in the public writings of divines and in the private letters of merchants alike it is impossible to discover any emphasis upon the idea that God rewards virtue with riches" (ibid: 96 - 97). However the theory is less easily dismissed in terms of negative affect - "the quite differently emphasised proposition that God punishes sin by an economic calamity" (ibid) - a trend whose insidious influence may, arguably, have been reflected in public resignation, or even fatalism, among the Gaelic speaking population in face of cultural attack and capitalist exploitation.

1.2.6 The removal of the Scottish court to London in 1603 introduced the modern era in which both "worldly" achievement and cultural development have increasingly been subject to forces south of the border. As a *Scottish* historian revealingly remarks: "now it was plain, as ideed it was natural (sic) that (James) would devote most of his attention to the greater and wealthier nation" (Mackie, 1964: 192). That full citizenship of the new state was to be available only at the cost of cultural subtraction seems to have been recognised by Allan Ramsay and subsequent "revivalist" Scots vernacular writers (Lindsay, 1981: 308). Similar recognition is to be found in the Gaelic tradition (MacInnes, 1989), - for example, in the following statement by a South Uist man who, MacInnes suggests, would have been aware of the Statutes of Iona, and so, one might reasonably infer, also of the

Revolution Settlement of 1688, the Massacre of Glencoe, Culloden, the Disarming Act and the rise of landlordism:

1.2.6.1 "The severest blow which our language has ever received, was the removal of the Royal Family to England and the attendance of our men of rank and influence at Court; who were carrying back to their country the manners and language of England and the Lowlands" (MacDonald, 1805, quoted MacInnes, 1989, op cit: 99).

1.2.7 Social and cultural change throughout Scotland from the seventeenth century may be seen against a common economic backdrop. The Glenorchy peasant prosecuted for "blooding the laird's kye" and the Monquhitter wadsetter "found dead on the shore with raw flesh between his teeth" (Smout, op cit: 154 - 155); or the percentages of Scottish children recorded by the Argyll Commission (1865 - 67) as not being in receipt of any form of education - the Highland area (35%), Glasgow (48%) and Shetland (86%) - (Smith, 1981, op cit: 29), seem symbolic of the same process:

1.2.7.1 "The spatially uneven wave of modernisation over state territory creates relatively advanced and less advanced groups. As a consequence of this initial fortuitous advantage, there is crystallisation of the unequal distribution of resources and power between the two groups" (Hechter, 1975: 9).

1.2.8 From the end of the seventeenth century "settlement" and "civilisation" began to give way to "clearance", in the name of "economic progress": the "accumulation of capital and the advance of knowledge"

(leading to) "a population smaller in amount, but enjoying a higher civilisation, and contributing in a corresponding degree to the general progress of the world" (Duke of Argyll, quoted Grigor, 1979: 13):

1.2.8.1 "the policy of enclosing was 'economic'.....and as the rights and necessities of the poor were a secondary consideration, the ruthless clearances and ejectments of the peasantry, which began in Galloway, soon became a general feature in Lowland agricultural economies....North of the River Forth the eviction of human beings was carried on with so great a barbarity and on so colossal a scale as to arouse the anger and disgust of the whole civilised world...." (Johnston, 1924: 185....189).

1.2.9 As Grigor points out, "the common people, as such, had no concerted voice with which to speak....the forces which would later support the emergence of effective popular resistance to oppression were still dormant" (Grigor, 1979: 10). The effects were compounded in the remote areas to the North and West. The tenacity of traditional linguistic and cultural mores not only increased "the ill-defined but profound sense of unease" (ibid) with which the Highlands were viewed from the south (and the corresponding determination with which these mores were attacked) but also, at a deep-rooted level, created the conditions for this unease to be both "justified and reinforced by the Jacobite risings of 1715, 1719 and 1745" (ibid):

1.2.9.1 "though the ordinary Highlander obeyed a strict code of loyalty to a local superior or clan chief (which made him an outstanding soldier in the British Army from the later eighteenth



century onwards), he knew no such tradition of subservience to a distant, impersonal authority like central government" (ibid).

1.2.10 The attitude of the Church towards Gaelic has been described as "ambivalent", especially prior to 1688 (Durkacz, op cit: 17). On the one hand, despite its failure to produce a Gaelic version of the Bible during this period ("one of the greatest lost opportunities in Gaelic history" - ibid: 16) the Church of Scotland "did appreciate that preaching in the mother tongue was in accordance with scripture" (ibid: 10) and also a vital tool with which to forestall the counter-Reformation (ibid: 9) - "a tendency from which popular Gaelic literacy was later to develop" (ibid: 17). On the other hand educational legislation during this period has been described as having "sought brutally to repress Gaelic in the interests of political and cultural uniformity" (Durkacz, op cit: 17). MacLeod (1963, op cit: 307) suggests that, despite the "negligible" practical effects of such legislation on Highland literacy, "the attitude which inspired it was one which was to become more and more firmly established". The balance inevitably tipped in favour of the dominant language:

1.2.10.1 "It was Gaelic's misfortune that during the crucial years from 1688 to 1709, when the foundations of eighteenth-century Highland education were laid, the political end of extirpating the Gaelic language prevailed over the religious aim of evangelising Highlanders through Bible literacy in the mother tongue" (Durkacz, op cit: 17).

1.2.11 The Revolution Settlement of 1688 and the establishment of Presbyterianism in 1690 (Mackie, 1969: 252) brought in their wake renewed efforts "to win the Highlands from Catholicism and Episcopalianism" (Durkacz, op cit: 17) - with, in this at least, the evangelistic energies of the Church moving in unison with the political concerns of the new king. For though Mackie (op cit: 250) suggests that William was "tolerant in religion and broad-minded" he had a pressing need to prove himself king "*de jure* as well as *de facto*" (ibid): the spread of English-medium education ("to bring the Highlands within the compass of the national system", MacLeod, 1963, op cit: 308) was one method of achieving both religious and political conformity. Thus in 1694 (two years after the Massacre of Glencoe) William forcibly annexed the forfeit rents of the Bishopric of Argyll and the Isles "for the purpose of 'erecting English schools for rooting out the Irish language, and other pious purposes' (sic)" (Campbell, 1945, op cit: 46). In 1696 the *Act for the Settling of Parish Schools* passed again through the Scottish Parliament (cf 1.1.17, above), "this time with a particular view to its implementation in the Highlands" (Durkacz, op cit: 46). The dual purpose of this Act is generally accepted, as is its implications for Gaelic education:

1.2.11.1 "The expansion of the parish school system into the Gaelic-speaking area....came as much to assist central government in the settlement of the areas as to fulfil the aims of the church. These parish and burgh schools tended to reflect their origins and did nothing to foster Gaelic education within the classroom....(they were) opposed in theory and practice to the use of Gaelic" (Smith, 1981, op cit: 4).

1.2.12 For practical reasons the re-enactment proved as resistant to implementation as had its predecessors (Durkacz, op cit, 46; cf also 1.1.18, above). Thus in order to supplement the national provision, "various organisations came into being for the purpose of bringing a knowledge of letters to the illiterate, though not uneducated, population of the Gaelic area" (MacLeod, op cit: 308). Unfortunately, as MacLeod points out, such independent, or "charity" schools based their efforts "upon the unenlightened premise that a knowledge of reading could not be imparted to the Gaelic speaker in his own language" (ibid). The Society in Scotland for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge (SSPCK) - formed by "a small number of pious and public-spirited citizens of Edinburgh" with a view to reforming the manners and "gloomy religious superstition" in "the dreary and dark regions of their own country" (SSPCK Minutes, 1701, quoted MacLeod, op cit: 308) - stated the terms of their evangelistic mission unequivocally:

1.2.12.1 "Nothing can be more effectually for reducing these countries....to order and making them usefull to the Commonwealth than teaching them their duty to God, their King and Countrey, and rooting out their Irish language" (SSPCK Minutes, 1716, quoted Campbell, op cit: 51).

1.2.13 MacKay (quoted Campbell, op cit: 51 - 52) gives insight into the incongruity - in terms of educational practice, quite apart from social utility and human rights - of treating Gaelic as if it did not exist in communities such as Urquhart and Glenmoriston:

1.2.13.1 "The excellent Lowlanders who directed the affairs of the Society in its early days dreaded Gaelic as they dreaded Papistry, with which they associated it....the result was that, while the great majority of the children, who knew no language but Gaelic, learned mechanically to read the Proverbs, Confession of Faith, Shorter Catechism....(etc)....which were their not too attractive school-books, they utterly failed to understand what they read; and that when they left school they left their books and their 'learning' behind them" MacKay, quoted Campbell, op cit: 51 - 52).

1.2.14 The rich educational kaleidoscope of Aberdeenshire rural life came to a halt at summer's end for the poet Charles Murray's "wee herd" - "fan in spite o' hacks an chilblains he was shod again for squeel". And "the Catechist" and the "rule o' three" seemed scant justification for the poem's deeply symbolic denouement: "the maister brunt the fustie that the wee herd made" (Murray, 1901). But he went, presumably because his parents made him - despite the cultural and linguistic chasm between home and school indicated by Murray's Vale of Alford dialect and imagery (Lindsay, 1981: 252). In general, however, the Gaelic-speaking parent was resistant to an even more foreign form of education - and seems to have remained so even after the Act of 1872 which made education compulsory (cf 1.2.29, below). MacLeod (1963, op cit: 309 - 310) cites evidence that many teachers found the enforced medium equally irksome, and even rebelled against the stipulation, though in so doing they faced dismissal (ibid: 309). But, as MacLeod points out:

1.2.14.1 "The obliteration of a language is not easily achieved by direct methods and even the more subtle campaign directed against it in the schools proved unsuccessful, as is indicated by the fact that of an estimated population of 335,000 in the Highlands at the beginning of the 19th century about 300,000 understood no other language but Gaelic" (ibid: 311)

1.2.15 After about fifty years of trying to operate an English-medium system with little success despite, according to Campbell, exerting "every kind of pressure....and (offering) every inducement - money, shoes, etc" (Campbell, op cit: 51) the S.S.P.C.K. seems to have altered its approach:

1.2.15.1 "by the middle of the century (1767) it had officially reversed its policy in favour of the use of Gaelic as a teaching medium. By the end of the century it had over 300 schools in Scotland, most of them in the Gaelic area, and it had already begun to train Gaelic-speaking pupil teachers, to produce Gaelic text books, and to subsidise Gaelic publication" (Smith, op cit: 4)

1.2.16 The extent to which this apparent *volte face* reflected a real change in attitude is, however, arguable, at least until after 1784 (cf 1.2.17.1, below). Campbell (op cit: 52) points to government policy in the aftermath of the '45 Jacobite Rising, aimed at the settlement of its "barbarous", "ignorant" and, as had been proved, potentially dangerous outpost. The Highland landowners who had "protected and encouraged the native traditions" (Campbell op cit: 54), were almost to a man "forfeited and in exile" (ibid), their estates "administered by Commissioners, whose

policy was to give every encouragement to the S.P.C.K. and official parochial schools" (ibid). Campbell refers to an estate factor's report of 1784, which records the existence of "'schools useful in learning the young English, and the masters to discharge (i.e. forbid) the Scholars to speak Irish....'" (Report of the Commissioners' Factor on the Estate of Robertson of Strowan, 1784: quoted Campbell, op cit: 54) (1) and to Dr Johnson's description of the condition of the Highlands in 1773:

1.2.16.1 "Of what they had before the late conquest of their country, there remains only their language and their poverty. Their language is attacked on every side. Schools are erected in which English only is taught...etc" (Johnson, 1766, quoted Campbell, op cit: 54).

1.2.17 It is illuminating to read an account of the same period from a "mainstream" Scottish historian - and to recall that this has been the diet fed to successive generations of students of Scottish history. Mackie (op cit: 276) recounts how the management of the income from forfeit lands was put into the hands of trustees "directed to apply it to the promotion of Protestantism, good order and education in the Highlands":

1.2.17.1 "The trustees did their work well. Order was soon restored. Schools were established. The system of land-tenure was improved and some afforestation was begun. Handicrafts were introduced. So successful was their achievement that, in 1872, the ban on the kilt was removed and, in 1784, the forfeited lands were restored to their former owners upon payment of moderate sums, which were used in part

for the building of the Register House and, in part, for the construction of the Forth and Clyde Canal" (Mackie, op cit: 276).

1.2.18 The policy of settlement was accompanied by the enlistment of disaffected clansmen in Highland Regiments of the British Army - a short-term strategy (commended by Pitt "on the ground that 'not many of them would return'", Mackie, op cit: 276 - 277), with immeasurable long-term effects. But a more subtle process contributed to the almost complete loss of morale in large sections of the Gaelic-speaking community, undermining irrevocably the philosophical foundations upon which their society was organised. Johnston (1924, op cit: 161) describes the centuries of decline, antagonism and assimilation in terms of an ideological clash between Anglo-Norman feudalism and patriarchal Gaelic "semi-communism" quoting, from the *Report of the Crofters' Commission* (1884, v: 451ff), a description of the run-rig system still operative in the Western Isles ("despite the ravages of feudalism, despite the thunder of hostile Parliaments, and despite the antipathy of laird and factor") as illustration of the communal cooperation, care and justice around which traditional Gaelic society was organised (Johnston, 1924, op cit: 155 - 157). The education of landed heritors outwith the Gaelic community (cf 1.1.12, above) had, from 1603, already begun the gradual process described by MacKinnon (op cit: 43) as "the alienation of the Gael from his traditional social leaders" (cf, for example, "*Oran mòr Mhic Leòid*", Roderick Morrison's poetic description of the deterioration of communal life after the succession of a new, anglicised clan chief in 1693: Watson, 1959: 161 and notes: 306). But in the aftermath of the '45 the process was completed too precipitately for society to adapt: the extended family of the clan became transmogrified into a

landlord-tenant relationship, communal cooperation into "one based upon a money economy" (MacKinnon, op cit: 43). Johnston (1924, op cit: 162) gives, as an example of the confusion of the Gaelic-speaking community in face of change, the refusal of the people of the Riddel estate at Ardnamurchan (1759) to pay rent to anyone "who was not their chief by blood" until forced to do so by government troops. Thus:

1.2.18.1 "The Highlands were opened up for commercial exploitation and the institution of a greater division of labour in society" (MacKinnon, op cit: 43).

1.2.19 The period of mass migration which began about this time is characterised not only by the crowded emigrant ship making its way to the New World but also by the crowded city tenement and communities of Gaelic-speakers making their way in industrial society (Withers, op cit: 182ff). The Rev Norman MacLeod (1893) describes the situation from his own experience as a minister in Glasgow:

1.2.19.1 "Year by year I saw that Highland population augmented by a stream of young men and women flowing into the city in quest of work - not driven away in the majority of cases by eviction at all - but simply following the trade of the country and seeking to better themselves. The young came first and, bye-and-bye, after they had settled down, it was no uncommon occurrence for the whole family, parents and all, to follow" (MacLeod, 1893, op cit: TGS1, xviii: 303)



1.2.20 In his review of the "Causes of Decline" of the Celtic languages, Durkacz (op cit: 214ff) concludes that "the expanding burghs on the fringes of the Highlands were a major source of anglicisation" (op cit: 215), citing Inverness, in which, in 1704, "the overwhelming majority of the citizens understood English, whilst the surrounding countryside was almost totally Gaelic" (ibid). Certainly this accords with the present writer's own experience of growing up (from 1949) on the outskirts of an anglicised Highland burgh with a fairly high immigrant Gaelic population and a still discernibly Gaelic periphery bordering on yet remoter and more thoroughly Gaelic-speaking communities. However, in forty years the situation has all but reversed: the language, where it has survived at all in the outlying districts, is confined almost exclusively to the very old, while in the town, due to the traditional (and continuing) influx of Gaelic-speaking people from the Western Isles in pursuit of employment, there is still a strong Gaelic presence. While incomers to the remoter rural communities have tended to be the better-off English-speaking commuter, holiday visitor or retiree, urban-dwellers from the Outer Isles tend to be younger - in many instances females who marry and raise families in the town. (Some key figures in the Gaelic play-group movement have emerged from among Gaelic-speaking mothers in this category.) Thus in turn, the establishment of Gaelic-medium primary education in urban centres preceded (and, probably, to a large extent inspired) similar demand in the Isles (3.1, below).

1.2.21 These developments contain an element of *déjà vu*. As a result of the efforts of urban-dwelling Gaelic speakers in the early nineteenth century a voluntary movement emerged which provided "the only schools ever

to appear in the Gaelic-speaking area in which the sole educational medium was Gaelic, the mother tongue, and, at that time, the only tongue of the vast majority of children" (Smith, 1981: 5). Harding (1980) describes the Edinburgh Gaelic School Society (established 1811, and the precursor of similar societies in Glasgow, 1812 and Inverness, 1818 - MacLeod, op cit: 316) as having originated from dissatisfaction with the work of the SSPCK:

1.2.21.1 "Many native Gaelic speakers, particularly those who had prospered in the cities, had not forgotten the Society's long antipathy towards Gaelic, nor been convinced by the arguments in favour of teaching English first. They sincerely believed that although many of their countrymen in the far north and west could read the Scriptures in English they did so mechanically and with little or no understanding" (Harding, op cit: 1).

1.2.22 The Society Schools (or "*Sgoilean Chrìosd*" - "*Schools of Christ*" - as they became affectionately known) were modeled on the Circulating Schools in Wales, initiated in 1730 to enable Welsh-speaking children and adults to read the Scriptures in the mother-tongue: by 1761 they had been catering for almost 10,000 scholars (ibid: 2). The Sgoilean Chrìosd, although their teachers were required to be "neither preachers nor public preachers nor public exhorters" (ibid: 3), had the same missionary purpose as their Welsh counterparts: "instructing children and adults to read the Sacred Scriptures in the only language which they understand" (Gaelic School Society Annual Report, 1811: 57, quoted Harding, op cit: 3):

1.2.22.1 "The Gaelic schools, and very largely for the reason indicated, their choice of medium, but possibly also because they were free and evangelical, were very popular and also, within their limitations, very successful" (Smith, J A 1981, op cit: 5).

1.2.23 Following the Welsh model again, the Gaelic School Society was highly active in raising funds from exiled Gaelic speakers and other sympathisers, which it devoted to the establishment of teaching posts and distribution of Gaelic religious texts; its teachers, utilising premises converted for the purpose by the local people, operated on a circulatory basis, thus effecting a very rapid spread of Gaelic literacy across a very wide area:

1.2.23.1 "Instead of setting up permanent centres it followed the inspired principle of settling a schoolmaster in a certain locality for a period not exceeding three years. When the inhabitants of this locality had acquired a fair proficiency in reading the Gaelic scriptures, the schoolmaster moved on to a new sphere of activity and started afresh the laborious task of teaching another group of conscientious but mainly illiterate pupils of all ages" (MacLeod, M 1963, op cit: 313).

1.2.24 Smith (1981 op cit: 5) suggests that "strictly speaking, they were not schools in the real sense of the term": confining their remit almost entirely to scripture reading, they constituted ultimately "a great opportunity lost for Gaelic education":

1.2.24.1 "They created a hunger for education....which proved to be their own undoing because, ultimately....they failed to satisfy" (ibid).

1.2.25 This, Smith suggests, (ibid: 15 - 16) probably accounts for the somewhat ambiguous comment of the Rev. MacKay of Harris - delivered as evidence to the Argyll Commission, which investigated the conditions of education in Scotland prior to the 1872 Education Act, and often quoted out of context as an instance of anti-Gaelic betrayal: "Gaelic schools the people won't have". Withers (op cit: 146) points out that the Gaelic School Society itself, while adhering rigidly to its stated "Gaelic only" policy within its schools, acknowledged that Gaelic literacy would inevitably lead to the extension and use of English, and believed that this was "'a thing to be desired by every man'" (Gaelic School Society Annual Report, 1815: 2, quoted Withers, op cit: 146). Withers indicates that in some areas parents were so pleased by their children's progress in Gaelic that they paid the teacher to instruct them, out of hours, in English literacy skills (ibid). The Sgoilean Chrìosd had another, more unexpected, indirect effect, which in itself hastened the spread of English literacy. Inspired by the obvious success of the Gaelic schools

1.2.25.1 "another wave of expansion of schools...followed shortly after, namely the assembly schools of the Established Church, the Free Church, and several other Church agencies all in competition with each other and offering a wider elementary school curriculum" (Smith, op cit: 5)

1.2.26 MacLeod (op cit: 319) says that "by the middle of the 19th century there are so many agencies at work in the field of Highland education....that the general position becomes rather confusing". However it seems to have been the rule that, wherever practical and as soon as possible, the medium of education should be English, though Gaelic could be introduced as a discrete subject at a later stage (MacLeod, op cit: 319). Morrison (Stornoway Gazette, 1951: 65) gives a taste of a Free Church Ladies' Association school in Lewis, from the viewpoint of the consumer:

1.2.26.1 The recent anniversary celebrations of the West Highland Mission brought to our mind memories of yarns passed down to our generation of 'Sgoil na Leddies' where the gracious dames taught school before universal education became the rule. These were ladies or 'leddies' by virtue of speaking English and wearing skirts instead of a 'còta-plangaid' or 'drogaid' like the native females. They were visible replicas of her far-off majesty Queen Victoria".

1.2.27 It is well to retain Morrison's archetypal island humour in mind when approaching statements such as Withers' "the continual devaluation of Gaelic had made it seem secondary even to those who spoke it" (op cit: 147), though he is right to emphasise that all education "was imposed from without" (ibid). In view of the general economic conditions in the Gaelic-speaking areas and the almost total lack of published Gaelic literature, the desire of many Gaelic-speakers to learn English is as understandable as is the failure of many parents to send their children to school at all (Smith, op cit: 22). Had these endemic problems been properly addressed at the time the subsequent history of Gaelic culture might have been very

different. But the attitude of both Church and State is summed up by the Secretary of the SSPCK, reporting to the Argyll Commission that what was needed was "'a good English education', which would enable the people to emigrate" (MacLeod, *op cit*: 319). Campbell (*op cit*) suggests an even more cynical degree of intentionality:

1.2.27.1 "they were unable to visualise *any* solution for Highland and Hebridean poverty except emigration, and their method of encouraging the people to emigrate was to educate *all* of them as potential emigrants. The education they recommended was calculated to equip them for export" (Campbell, *op cit*: 62).

1.2.28 Thus it may be suggested that Gaelic was not seen as "secondary" to this or many subsequent generations of Gaelic-speakers (cf 1.1.23.1, above): this is indicated by its tenacity as the language of home, socialisation and religion, on both sides of the Atlantic and under circumstances increasingly inexpedient for language maintenance. By 1911 it is unsurprising to find that bilingualism or even language loss appears most sharply in the 19 - 25 age-range - among the young working age group (Durkacz, *op cit*: 216). Taking account of all the relevant factors it should perhaps be seen as the more remarkable that Gaelic has survived within its own domains to the late 20th century. This must to a large extent be attributed to the utilisation of Gaelic as the language of worship (Durkacz, *op cit*: 96ff) which maintained a vital element of diglossia for the language while establishing for organised religion a lasting allegiance - perhaps even psychological dependency - which is still discernible today despite the decline of Gaelic ministry. Conversely, the

failure of the nascent Scottish Education Department to acknowledge Gaelic as a viable spoken language almost certainly had effects on the communal and individual self-image and on attitudes towards the education system and even the learning process itself, which are not necessarily reflected in the deeds and words of high-achieving emigrés. Again Morrison (op cit: 70) expresses the worms' eye view:

1.2.28.1 "To be found wanting for H.M.I. was a crime against man and Edinburgh, but not to know the Ceistean (*i.e. Shorter Catechism*) brought the wrath of parents, schoolmaster, minister and heaven".

1.2.29 Smith (1981) gives an invaluable account of circumstances attendant upon the 1872 Education Act. For present purposes it may suffice to say that the Act

1.2.29.1 "laid the foundation of an educational system for the Highlands which was to be in close conformity with that for the rest of the country. That no account should have been taken of the peculiar linguistic situation of the Highlands is almost inconceivable. No recognition is given to the language. It is not even mentioned" (MacLeod, 1963: 319).

1.2.30 Over the three decades after 1872 an intensive campaign was maintained by a number of pro-Gaelic organisations - notably the Gaelic Society of Inverness (founded 1871), the venerable Gaelic Society of London (founded 1777), and An Comunn Gaidhealach (founded 1891) - to establish a place for Gaelic within the official system. Gradually concessions began

appearing, like the Code of 1875, which acknowledged the expedience of using Gaelic when testing the intelligence of Gaelic speaking children - a clause which had little effect in practice, as few of the School Inspectors who would have administered the procedures were themselves Gaelic speakers (ibid: 321).

1.2.31 In 1878 Gaelic was accepted as a special school subject, though not until later given the status of a "pass" subject for examination or recognised for the award of grants to teachers (MacLeod, op cit: 322). The Report of the Napier Commission on Crofting (1883) contained complaints from many grassroots witnesses about the lack of Gaelic educational provision, and made some positive recommendations (Campbell, op cit: 70). Yet there was little or no headway on the question of using Gaelic as a teaching-medium in Gaelic speaking districts, well-recognised as the crux of the matter by members of the Gaelic Society of Inverness:

1.2.31.1 "The principle ever contended for by this society - that of employing Gaelic as the medium of instruction in schools in districts where English is not the mother tongue known to the people....You may charge the memory with meaningless symbols, but that is scarcely education" (Morrison, W: 1884: 17).

1.2.32 There can be little doubt that learning through English was a distinct disincentive to school attendance: as was observed of the situation in Morvern in 1825:



1.2.32.1 "in Gaelic schools the children understand what they read. Hence it is that Gaelic scholars cannot be kept from school, whilst English scholars cannot be whipped into regular attendance" MacLeod, 1825, quoted MacLeod, 1963: 315).

1.2.33 That the advent of compulsory (though still not free) education did not substantially alter this situation is indicated by a heated debate between Sir Kenneth MacKenzie of Gairloch and William Morrison, Rector of Dingwall Academy, at a gathering of the Gaelic Society of Inverness (TGSi 1884: 120 - 124). The topic under discussion was the inordinately high educational levies imposed upon many areas in the Highlands and Islands due, it had been suggested by a visiting education officer, to a vicious circle of non-attendance and consequent failure to earn government capitation grants (cf also Gillies, 1989b). MacKenzie brings down the full weight of the Rector's wrath by suggesting that "unfortunately it is just where education is most required that it is least valued" (TGSi 1884: 121). Morrison's reply is classic, and was greeted by cheers:

1.2.33.1 "All this comes of a short sighted policy emanating from a remote and central source where those who sit in authority in educational matters see, but in distant and dim perspective, the conditions of the Gaelic-speaking people of the North....The studied neglect....shown in contemning the use of the vernacular in imparting an English education is, in the highest degree, insensate, and is certain to recoil upon the heads of those who are responsible for that neglect" (Morrison, TGSi 1884: 123).

1.2.34 Unfortunately the activities of urban-based associations in many - and increasing - instances failed to reflect Morrison's professional and personal understanding of the situation. Perusal of the Transactions of the Inverness Society yields an impression of gradually decreasing political bite, and proportionately increasing bias towards scholasticism in its articles, imperialism in its rituals and polemic. That the latter tendency, undoubtedly amplified by military involvement in the Boer and subsequent wars, exercised an insidious influence on public perceptions, may be adjudged by the unedited reporting, in the publication of a reputable Gaelic organisation, of sentiments such as the following:

1.2.34.1 "When the imperial spirit was low, trade fell with it. He hoped to see their Chief again sitting in Parliament. He hoped to see men like him occupying every seat, not only in the Highlands, but all over the country - men like him who were devoted to their local districts, ready to look abroad and see that, unless as members of a great empire, they were a very small people indeed...it was essential that the limits of that empire should be extended, and that every spot on the habitable globe available should be seized for the development of their race, being well assured that wherever the British flag flies, and wherever there was an acre, the Highlander would have a rood and the Scotchman another" (Sir H. C. MacAndrew, 1894, quoted TGSi xix: 155)

1.2.35 The speech earned a wan acknowledgement from the Chief himself - Charles Fraser-MacIntosh, MP, well-thought of for his pro-Gaelic stance in Parliament - and with it another reminder of the political centrifuge:

"although it was a great deal of trouble to come from one end of the Kingdom to another, it was at all times a great pleasure to him to meet with his fellow countrymen and discuss subjects to them of kindred interest". The apparent need for public validation by members of the dominant establishment is a *leitmotiv* running through much of the workings of such societies throughout this century, and the ironies it spawned did nothing to recommend them to the grassroots Gaelic-speaking community:

1.2.35.1 "Highland Societies in Glasgow annually select as chairman at their atavistic Annual Gatherings, the pickings of princelings in various walks of life, but tenuously connected with the Highlands - often the scions of houses that sponsored the Clearances" (Morrison, n.d. Stornoway Gazette, 1950's: 96).

1.2.36 Conjecture as to the origins of this tendency cannot ignore the wider British arena around the turn of the century. The potential relationship between cultural and political resurgence had been proven by Irish experience (Durkacz, op cit: 202 - 203). The historical relationship between the Gaelic-speaking Scot and his Irish cousin, less clear-cut as a result of early colonialism and sectarian divergence, was further confused by the appointment, in 1918, of Iain MacPherson, Gaelic-speaking M.P. for Ross and Cromarty, to "the very difficult and dangerous office of Chief Secretary of State for Ireland", with the thankless task of re-introducing Gladstone's Home Rule Bill (TGSi xxxv: vii) and dealing with republicanism by military force. This period, and Scottish involvement in it, has left behind peculiar resonances. Not surprisingly "Ireland is not a recurring theme" (Brand, 1978: 47) in subsequent Scottish Nationalist campaigning -

and the same may be said of the Scottish Gaelic movement, which has tended to cite Welsh or Scandinavian rather than Irish experience and dissociate itself from separatist - or indeed any - political overtones.

1.2.37 At the turn of the century Highland Associations such as the Gaelic Society of London were busily fund-raising in aid of Gaelic education in the Highlands. Appeals were made to Scots-in-exile in South Africa, Canada and the United States and funds initiated to provide Gaelic books, class prizes and music prizes "to encourage the teaching of Gaelic in the elementary schools of the Highlands" (see, for example, GSL Annual Report, 1891: 13 - 14). A few years later we find the same Society distributing silver Gaelic Dux medals to pupils, and - to the teachers - capitation grants based on pupils' success in a prescribed Gaelic examination: in all 61 Highland schools applied. The singer Jessie MacLachlan reports on her success in raising money during a tour of the American continent. She had found Gaelic spoken everywhere she went (GSL Annual Report, 1903: 16, 18) - at the time of the 1891 Census, when just over 200,000 Gaelic speakers were recorded for Scotland, estimates put the Gaelic-speaking population of Canada alone at 250,000 (TGSI, 1899: viii).

1.2.38 On the face of it there should have been no difficulty in the implementation of the few modest concessions made to Gaelic in the post-1872 years: a questionnaire circulated by the Scotch Education Department in 1876 had revealed that over 70% of Highland School Boards were in favour of Gaelic teaching (MacLeod, M 1963, op cit: 321). But in the event this had carried little weight in face of the negative influence of the Inspectorate (Campbell, 1945: 66 - 67) and the status of Gaelic as a non-

examination subject (ibid: 73). Furthermore Dorian cites evidence to suggest that, whatever public expressions of support the school boards might make, they were unlikely, by virtue of their socio-economic make-up, to promote Gaelic unless compelled to do so:

1.2.38.1 "School Boards, as a rule, disapprove of (Gaelic) being taught, for they are composed of lairds, factors, clergymen, doctors and sheep-farmers - classes which generally have very few Celtic sympathies, indeed a strong desire to have the whole race Saxonised right off" (Cameron, 1877, quoted Dorian, 1981: 25).

1.2.39 Cameron was a teacher. The views of the practitioner are all too hard to find among the many words which were expended upon Gaelic education at this time, even among the testimonies sought and given to the Argyll Commission (Smith, op cit: 10). Therefore the following statement (a leading article from the EIS's official mouthpiece) is particularly valuable:

1.2.39.1 "It is to betray the grossest ignorance of all true education to say that we ought to ignore Gaelic, and teach English from the very beginning. We cannot do this even if we would, and we should not do it even if we could....It is utterly impossible to teach these Highland children except through the medium of their own tongue" (Leader, *Educational News*, 1879, quoted MacLeod, op cit: 323).

..2.40 By 1901 the Gaelic Society of London estimated that Gaelic was taught systematically in at least 58 schools to over 1500 pupils" (GSL

Annual Report, 1901: 18). But there is, of course, a world of difference between the teaching of Gaelic and teaching in Gaelic - the use, and therefore the acknowledgement, of the mother-tongue as a viable medium of instruction. The cruelty of the situation is indicated in few poignant words from another teacher:

1.2.40.1 "the very fact that Gaelic is taught in my school has an elevating effect upon the children" (GSL Annual Report, 1891: 13)

1.2.41 In 1904, with a Scottish Education Bill in the wind, the Gaelic Society of London stepped up its activities, organising a conference at the House of Commons to formulate suggestions for Gaelic amendments, followed by a deputation, along with representatives of other Gaelic and Highland Societies, to the Secretary for Scotland. The statement made on this occasion by Dr John Matheson, the Gaelic Society of London's President, has a remarkably "modern" ring to it - he cites the bilingual and multilingual policies of almost every other European country, and quotes the Government's Resolution (1903) that

1.2.41.1 "except in large towns, as Madras, English should have no place in the scheme of (Indian) primary education" (GSL Annual Report, 1904: 16 - 18)

1.2.42 In 1907 An Comunn Gàidhealach published a pamphlet on "The Teaching of Gaelic in Highland Schools" in order to "contribute to a juster view of the present situation" (An Comunn Gaidhealach, 1907:3). The primary object of the organisation, as stated in successive editions of its magazine "An

Deò-Grèine" (1905 - 1967, latterly named "An Gaidheal"), was and is to encourage and promote the teaching and use of the Gaelic language. A year later, in 1908, it published a trenchant and highly personalised argument in favour of Gaelic as a medium of education in Gaelic-speaking areas: "Gaelic in the Highland Schools" (MacAlister, 1908) - the address to An Comunn's Fourth Annual Conference at Oban, delivered by its President Sir Donald MacAlister, Principal, and later Chancellor of Glasgow University - a Tarbert man, distinguished scientist and noted linguist who had spoken Gaelic in his infancy and much regretted having lost the facility in later life (Rankin, 1983: 158).

1.2.43 "The Teaching of Gaelic in Highlands Schools" contains trenchant arguments too, but almost without exception they use as their invidious trump card the efficacy of Gaelic-medium instruction as a means to the learning of English, with the implicit corollary that Gaelic could be abandoned as soon as the "superior" language was established (though there might be a case for resuming it as an academic subject at a later stage in the educational process). The implication is not only that Gaelic was deficient, linguistically and culturally, in some essential (though undefined) sense; but also that education's most important rôle was fitting its Gaelic-speaking recipients to escape their native environment. A few random examples will suffice to give the general flavour:

1.2.43.1 "It is a well-known fact that these (Gaelic) schools were the first means of giving a real stimulus to English education" (An Comunn Gaidhealach, op cit: 15-16, Rev. Donald Murray - formerly Inspector of Gaelic Schools)

1.2.43.2 "No one advocates exclusive Gaelic culture, which would be most unwise, even were the literature higher than it is....they should also acquire the foreign tongue, English, for utilitarian and higher ends" (ibid: 18, William Jolly, HMI, quoted from Education Report, 1879-80: 142)

1.2.43.3 "though they could read English, they could not speak it, far less write it. Their inability to do so necessarily unfitted them for competition in the labour market, and made them less willing to seek their fortune in other parts of the world" (ibid: 22, from the Report of the Napier Commission: 1884).

1.2.43.4 "he felt sure of this, that if their only aim were to encourage the cultivation of English, they could not do it in a more effective way than through the medium of Gaelic" (ibid: 32, Dr Norman MacLeod, 1905).

1.2.44 At its inception An Comunn was hailed as being of seminal importance. It had sprung from within the Highlands (albeit the mainland) and therefore had the potential to represent authentic grassroots interests, disseminate positive attitudes in the Gaelic heartland, and give focus and credibility to the myriad activities of sympathetic external agencies on behalf of the Gaelic speaking community:

1.2.44.1 "A thousand cries from the Gaelic area would be more effective as a driving force than ten thousand trumpet calls from the cities of the South" (Dundee Highland Society Year-book, 1918 - 19: 3)



1.2.45 As part of a wider political campaign the appearance of "The teaching of Gaelic in Highland Schools" may have contributed towards minor concessions for Gaelic in subsequent legislation. But with hindsight it seems another "lost opportunity", compounding existent misconceptions as to the educational needs of the Gàidhealtachd and once again representing the interests of the Gaelic speaker by means of remote agencies. Today the voice of the practising Gaelic educationist is more readily heard - e.g. MacLeod (1963, op cit), Smith (1981, op cit), Dunn and Robertson (1989, op cit). They are unanimous on the importance of Gaelic-medium education, as opposed to subject teaching, dismissing in a few lines the relevance of successes such as the insertion of a Gaelic clause into the 1918 Education Act, hailed in its time as "the magna charta of Gaelic education (TGSI, xxx 1919 122). As Murray (1989) says:

1.2.45.1 "Gaelic, when it was accepted as worthy of inclusion in the formal system, strove to fit in and became as 'academic' as the rest of the curriculum. On its entry to University there was, no doubt, some celebration, a feeling that we had penetrated the system, that we had arrived. There still is. But we had not arrived: it was the Gaelic language, not the Gaelic community, that had 'made it'. And I am sure the language will continue to be an accepted part of academic curricula long after the community has ceased to use it" (Murray, op cit: 58).

1.2.46 The use of Gaelic as a medium of education did appear over the intervening years in some schools in the Highlands and Islands, largely due to the efforts of individual teachers. Such provision, however, was "sporadic and independent of the official system" (Dunn and Robertson, op cit: 44) MacLeod (1963: 325ff) gives a valuable account of the development of Gaelic-medium teaching in schools in Invernessshire in the 1950's and 60's, described from the teachers' point of view by MacColla, a Headteacher in Barra during this period, in a district which he describes as "95% Gaelic-speaking: the school population nearer 98%" (MacColla, op cit: 44):

1.2.46.1 "I, along with all the other teachers in the area, received a summons to attend a meeting in order to be addressed by a number of highly-placed personages in the administration of the educational system. The subject of our instruction was the new methods which were to be adopted in our schools with regard to the teaching of the Gaelic language....What was new was that we were now to be allowed - nay encouraged - to teach the children through the medium of their native language for the first year or so of their school life. What was funny about this being new was that it had been accepted educational practice practically everywhere since the melting of the last ice-cap....Only in Scotland would one find anyone, posing as an educationist, regarding such a self-evidently sound idea as new" (ibid).

1.2.47 However, this policy provided at least a basis for development after the reorganisation of local government (1975), the creation of the Western Isles Islands Council (Comhairle nan Eilean) and the establishment of the Western Isles Bilingual Educational Project (MacLeod, D.J. 1976; Murray and Morrison, 1984; Mitchell, MacIntyre, MacDonald and MacLennan, 1987; MacKinnon, 1987). The importance of these developments in terms of the self-image of the island-dwelling Gaelic-speaker cannot be over-estimated - nor their importance in terms of the maintenance of Gaelic within its residual heartland:

1.2.47.1 "The people of the islands have a good deal more control over their affairs than they had in 1951. They are more actively interested in the present and the future, but not less interested in the past. Island life has a three-dimensional quality which was lacking in 1951 (J. Shaw Grant, 1987: 3)

1.2.48 However, in terms of the maintenance - or restoration - of Gaelic within a larger Scottish dimension, it would seem that the events of the present decade may prove to have as great, if not greater significance, setting in train a wider movement which cannot but be of benefit to the heartland. It is to these developments that the major part of this thesis is devoted.

a

## 2. LINGUISTIC BACKGROUND

*"One day in 1976, in a village on the west side of Lewis, a five year old girl whom I knew very well told me, in Gaelic, that she could speak three languages.....Gàidhlig agus Beurla...agus English"*

*(Murray, 1987)*

## 2.1 LANGUAGE TEACHING: HISTORICAL OVERVIEW: (a) THE RULE OF GRAMMAR

2.1.1 Modern linguists have pointed out the fallacy of equating so-called "traditional" methods of language teaching with a formal, analytical, structurally based approach. Krashen and Terrell, for example, suggest that second languages were for centuries transmitted by what would nowadays be dubbed "direct methods" - by communication in specific circumstances, without undue reference to grammar or use of the mother tongue (Krashen and Terrell, 1983: 7). Greek was used as the medium of instruction for upper class Egyptian children in the Ptolemaic period, for pupils in Asia Minor during Hellenistic times, and for Jewish children in Egypt and Asia (McLaughlin, 1978: 9-10). During the classical period children throughout the Roman Empire were educated bilingually:

2.1.1.1 "The Greek language was introduced before children had any formal instruction in their first language, indeed before they had any marked control of Latin. By the time children started formal instructions, they were bilingual in both languages, although some children spoke Latin with a Greek accent. This led to occasional patriotic outcries against the emphasis on Greek in the education of Roman children. Moreover there was some fear that two languages were too great a burden for many children. Nonetheless, as late as the 4th century A.D. bilingual education was an important part of the curriculum of Roman children, even children of the middle class such as Augustine" (ibid: 10).

2.1.2 McLaughlin (ibid) gives examples of bilingual Latin-Greek manuals introduced by the Romans from the 3rd century - "comparable to modern conversational handbooks" (ibid) in which structural elements were introduced systematically through dialogues. Titone (1968) points out that Latin was the international language of communication and culture throughout Europe during the Mediaeval period, a living language taught orally in a society in which every educated man was bilingual: and conversational Latin handbooks ("*Dialogi*" or "*Colloqui*") continued in existence even after Latin had ceased to be widely used for oral communication (Titone, op cit: 10). Bell (1981: 79) extrapolates a functional, "task-orientated" approach running parallel to the formal study of grammar from the rhetoricians of Greece, Alexandria and Rome, to the scholastic grammarians of the 17th century.

2.1.3 In Scotland, at least to the time of the Reformation, Latin, and to a lesser extent Greek and Hebrew, were taught orally and used as a means of instruction for other curricular areas. In 1553 Aberdeen Grammar School ruled that its pupils must speak Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French or Gaelic, Scots being banned (MacKenzie, 1948: 58). About ten years (and an upheaval in Church and State) later, the biographical writings of James Melville, describing his boy-hood school-days in Montrose, indicate the continuing status of both modern and classical languages, but foreshadow the increasing academic obsession with classical grammar, which was gradually to replace the use of Latin as a medium of instruction:

2.1.3.1 "We lernit thair the Rudimentis of the Latin grammair, with the vocablis in Latin and French; also divers speichis in French, with the reading and richt pronounciatioun of that tounge. We proceidit further to the Etymologie of Lillius and his Syntax, as also lital of the Syntax of Linacer; thairwith was joynit Hunter's Nomenclatura, the Minora Colloqui of Erasmus, and sum of the Eclogis of Virgil and Epistolis of Horace; also Cicero his Epistolis ad Terentiam. He haid a verie guid and profitable form of resolving the auctoris; he techit grammaticallie, baith according to the Etymologie and Syntax" (Melville, quoted MacKenzie, op cit: 58 - 59).

2.1.4 Indeed it may be argued that in the very supremacy of Latin lay the seeds of the more prescriptive approach to language which was well established in the grammar-books (both first and second language) of the 18th century but finds clear expression at least two centuries earlier. As Latin ceased to be used as a principal medium of education after the Reformation it became "a mental gymnastic, the supremely dead language, a disciplined and systematic study of which was held to be indispensable as a basis for all forms of higher education" (Mallison, 1957:8). As McLaughlin (op cit) has it:

2.1.4.1 "Towards the end of the Renaissance, emphasis began to shift from the learning of language as a practical tool to the learning of language as a means to an end - that of developing the mind. Latin and Greek were taught because it was thought that the

study of grammar was good mental discipline. Since these languages were not living languages, little attention was given to oral communication. Texts were read and translated, and this - together with the study of grammar - became the essence of language training" (McLaughlin, op cit: 11).

2.1.5 Crystal (1985a: 52 - 53) quotes Roger Ascham's *"The Scholemaster"* (1570) to demonstrate how the vernacular had become classed as "base", or "rude", or "vile", or "gross" - language a commodity debased by commoners, preserved, enshrined and analysed by academics:

2.1.5.1 "the providence of God hath left unto us no other tongue save in the Greek and Latin tongue, the true precepts, and perfect examples of eloquence".

2.1.6 By the 19th century "grammaticalism" predominated, despite the influence of writers such as Montaigne and Locke, who insisted that "the spoken, not the written language be the basis of instruction....Locke suggested that the best way to instruct a child in Latin was to have a person close to the child who spoke and read nothing else" (McLaughlin, op cit: 12). (Locke also believed that grammar should be taught only to a person who could already speak the language - ibid: 13). Modern languages were taught like Latin and Greek - "as dead languages whose rules of morphology and syntax were to be memorized" (ibid: 11). The same pertained as regards the teaching of English grammar to English speaking pupils. From the 18th century normative grammatical rules and



"correct usage" became the obsession of writers such as Dryden (1631 - 1700) who invented the rule irreverently summarised by generations of school children as "a preposition is the wrong word to end a sentence with" and Swift in his *"Proposal for correcting, improving and ascertaining the English tongue"* (1712). This had far-reaching and tenacious effects on attitudes towards language in general:

2.1.6.1 "Grammar was not a set of facts described but of rules to be observed and of paradigms, i.e. patterns, to be followed...In other words grammar was prescriptive rather than descriptive....the normative way of viewing language is fraught with some great dangers....the tendency everywhere is to draw too narrow limits for what is allowable or correct. In many cases one form or one construction only is recognised, even where two or more are found in actual speech" (Jespersen, 1921: 24 - 25).

2.1.7 Crystal (1985b: 16) describes this as *"the etymological fallacy"* - the concept that historic language forms are somehow more pure or correct than contemporary usage. In fact, he points out, knowledge of past usage is entirely unnecessary to the study of the present state of any language: the vagueness of definition and inevitable failure of formal English grammar to cover all known and potential linguistic structures indicates the extent to which it prescribes according to mummified usages of the past and of classical languages with quite different structural characteristics (inflections, gender, etc) rather than describes in terms of dynamic contemporary usage (ibid: 18 - 19, and 20ff). This trend was to dominate the teaching of both English

grammar and second languages till recent times, despite (a) the powerful influence of the Romantic Movement - with its concomitant interest in primitive societies - which threw up "an embarrassing wealth of linguistic diversity" (Crystal: 1985a: 55) and (b) advances in the scientific study of linguistics.

2.1.8 Bell (op cit: 87) describes the late 19th century linguists - Sweet, Jespersen, de Saussure, Palmer et al - as "the founders of modern language teaching methods", preaching the avoidance of the "diachronic" approach (description of a language in terms of earlier stages in its development) and the substitution of "synchronism" (description in terms of present structure). Thus Jespersen (1904, quoted Bell, op cit: 88):

2.1.8.1 "The truly historical point of view leads to a recognition of the right to exist of present-day usage, however widely it may differ from the language of former periods".

2.1.9 In several other aspects the writings of these early linguists presages much later linguistic "discoveries". Bell (op cit: 88 - 90) summarises their main tenets in terms of three key axioms:

2.1.9.1 "*Language is a system*": de Saussure (posthumous, 1915) makes the analogy with chess, where each element has value only in terms of its relation to other elements - a theory which foreshadows the much later cognitive concepts of *deixis* (context dependency) and *register*, and the modern science of sociolinguistics;

2.1.9.2 *"Language is speech"*: Jespersen (op cit) asserts that the written system is a crude approximation, secondary and derivative: therefore the typical contractions and assimilations of spoken usage should be accepted for the purposes of language teaching, rather than the conventions of the written form; compare Hockett (1958:4 ): "Often enough the layman thinks that writing is somehow more basic than speech. Almost, the reverse is true"; and Lyons (1981: 11): "until recently grammarians have been concerned almost exclusively with the language of literature.....they have treated the norms of literary usage as the norms of correctness for the language itself...."

2.1.9.3 *"Language is conventional"*: Sweet (1899) calls it "partly rational, partly irrational and arbitrary", and insists on the importance of objective description of contemporary usage: "I shall confine myself to the statement and explanation of facts"; compare Lyons (op cit: 12) "it is a matter of historical accident that the usage of one region or of one social class should have served as the basis for the development of a standard literary language in particular communities and that, consequently, the dialects of other regions or classes should now be regarded....as inferior, or substandard, varieties of the language."

2.1.10 The pedagogic corollary to these axioms - the application of these early linguistic theories - assumes the construction of 'correctness' in terms not of some arbitrary definition but of context, 'style', appropriateness, comprehensibility; the rejection of

translation as a teaching method, in order to avoid confusing two unique language systems; the substitution of communication as the foundation of learning - hence the emphasis on pronunciation and the growth of interest in phonetics, dialect etc at the turn of the century, celebrated satirically in Shaw's "Pygmalion" (1916). And, as Bell points out (op cit: 89) such an application is to be found in the writings of Palmer (1921) who reverses the long accepted order of language learning - beginning with single words in their written form - and substitutes proficiency in recognising and producing sounds, thereafter building, without analysis, from sentences to complete utterances.

2.1.11 Titone (op cit) cites several educators in the 19th - early 20th centuries who advocated the use of natural methods of language teaching as opposed to the grammar-based approach: Ticknor, Heness, Marcel, Sauveur, and Gouin for example. The most influential advocate of such methods was Berlitz - whose "*direct method*", whereby grammar is learned inductively, using immersion ("steeping": Jespersen, 1947, quoted McLaughlin, op cit: 12) to emulate as far as possible the conditions whereby children acquire their first language - is described by McLaughlin (ibid):

2.1.11.1 "Berlitz argued that the learner must be taught as quickly as possible to think in the second language and for that purpose must use that language constantly without reverting to the first language. Exclusive stress is placed on the oral aspect of the language. Teachers must be native speakers, and classes are small (never more than 10 pupils) so that instruction is as

individualised as possible. No grammatical rules are taught; instead grammar is conveyed to the students by example and by visual demonstration. Reading and writing are skills that one acquires only after the spoken language has been mastered".

2.1.12 Krashen and Terrell (op cit: 10 - 12) give details of other attempts during the early part of this century to find a more natural approach to language teaching. The so-called "*natural method*" evolved by a sub-committee of the American Modern Language Association (1901) and the similar "*psychological method*" (cf Cole, 1931: 58 -59, cited Krashen and Terrell, op cit: 10). The "*series method*", based on the attempts of Gouin (1880) to learn German by conventional methods and his subsequent attempts to define more efficient methodology based on his study of first language acquisition by young children (cf Diller, 1971, cited Krashen and Terrell, op cit: 10). The "*phonetic*" and "*direct*" methods in Germany and America respectively, parallel to the "*méthode directe*" in France, and their development in, for example, the Goethe Institute (Krashen and Terrell, op cit: 10 - 11).

2.1.13 These, however, were the exceptions that proved the rule - the "dissenting voices" (McLaughlin, op cit: 11). By the 19th century the compilers of language textbooks "were mainly determined to codify the foreign language into frozen miles of morphology and syntax to be

explained and eventually memorised. Oral work was reduced to a minimum, while a handful of written exercises, constructed at random, came as a sort of appendix to the rules" (Titone, 1968: 27). Vocabulary lists were commonly learned by rote, and grammatical rules introduced *qua* grammar, in tabular or paradigmatic form, and recited as exempla of declension, conjugation etc as distinct from, and unrelated to real-life communication (Hall, 1968; Halliday, MacIntosh and Strevens, 1964 and Quirk and Smith, 1964). Linguistics, "the understanding of the underlying nature of language in general and the properties of languages in particular" (Derrick, 1966: 3 - 4) was largely ignored by the language teacher, who did little more than supervise his students' progress through the primer and on to the prose passage. Bahlsen's description of his own experience at the end of the 19th century, will strike chords with many 20th century language learners, including learners of Gaelic (cf for example, Mrs B, Case Study 2, section 3.4, below). To Bahlsen, studying French was:

2.1.13.1 "a barren waste of insipid sentence translation. Committing words to memory, translating sentences, drilling irregular verbs, later memorising, repeating and applying grammatical rules with their exceptions - that was and remained our main occupation" (Bahlsen, 1905: 10).

2.1.14 It should be recalled that the period described by Bahlsen was also the time when the vast majority of monolingual Gaelic speaking children were being educated through the medium of English, taught

Gaelic as a discrete academic subject - a policy which may seem less anomalous in the light of the prevailing attitude towards language teaching in general. The movement embodied by "*das Naturwüchsige*" of Herder (Crystal, op cit: 55) and the educational philosophy of Rousseau (1762) had made little practical impact upon the lives of ordinary Gaelic speakers, and the European fashion for Celtic folk-lore and philology was at its height while the Highland people were being suppressed and cleared from their land (MacLean: 1939).

## 2.2 LANGUAGE TEACHING: (b) TOWARDS A MORE COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH

2.2.1 As Rosen points out, (Rosen and Rosen, 1973: 225) teachers have found the formal approach to classroom language teaching comfortingly easy to plan, describe and evaluate: "it is a relatively straightforward business to describe your teaching if it has the appearance of a well-ordered structure". However well such schemes may reflect the teacher's intentionality, though, they fall far short of describing what the children are actually learning, and *how*: "In fact the less you concern yourself with *how* children learn the easier it is to produce a system" (ibid . Increasing understanding of cognitive psychology has encouraged practitioners more and more towards meaningful communication and away from the structurally based approach (both as regards the "traditional" description and analysis of First Language grammar and the teaching of Foreign Languages through grammar-translation lessons) - what Crystal calls the "corpse based" approach:

2.2.1.1 "parsing is no more than a mechanical way of cutting up a sentence into bits and labelling them - a kind of linguistic post mortem. Once we have labelled the bits the job seems to be over. No one ever explains why the job was carried out in the first place (apart from vague talk about it being a 'discipline for the mind') and no-one ever seems to want to put the sentence back together again" (Crystal, 1985b: 411 - 42)

2.2.2 A degree of urgency was introduced into the re-assessment of language-teaching methods by the necessity, during the Second World War,



to train intelligence personnel for complete communicative competency in Foreign Languages (McLaughlin, 1978: 134) which led to the development of the so-called "audio-lingual method" (Krashen and Terrell, 1983: 13 - 14), and in the post-war period by the arrival into many British classrooms of significant concentrations of first-generation immigrant children (cf Ministry of Education: 1963, and Schools Council: 1967). The progress of these children as English-language communicators immediately affected their entire social, cultural and educational experience - which in turn had obvious implications for whole-school management, discipline and educational progress (Derrick, 1966: 3 .

2.2.3 In the view of practitioners like Derrick (Organiser, during the 1960's, for the Schools Council Project in English for Immigrant Children) its systematic progression and resultant ease of administration did not justify the artificiality of the formal approach, which introduced content (lexical, informational etc) for its application to the structural syllabus rather than its relevance or application to the students' present experience and/or predictable future language needs. Derrick (ibid: 3 - 4) dubbed such methods 'non-linguistic':

2.2.3.1 "i.e. not taking account of it (language) as a complete and independent system of communication.... It is a commonplace that the majority of school-leavers who have had five or so years of French or German cannot speak either language when they come into contact with French or German speakers".

2.2.4 So the pedagogic emphasis switched from teaching *about* grammar to "training learners to speak grammatically": "One cannot learn to swim or to ride a bicycle by simply being told about it: one has to do it oneself" (ibid: 5). And the presentation of lexis, grammar, pronunciation etc became contextualised, in what Derrick calls the "structural-situational approach":

2.2.4.1 (language) "is used because the situation, the pattern of events, of human desires and demands, needs it for expression". (ibid: 140).

2.2.5 While graded structural progression remained as the underlying *raison d'être* of this type of language syllabus, rote learning was replaced by the acquisition of communicative skills, through dialogue, group discussion etc, using the children's immediate experience, classroom organisation, mainstream lesson content, extra-mural activities etc as the stimuli for reinforcement of language structure. Everyday social language, largely neglected by the traditional "academic" or "classical language" approach, was identified as being of paramount importance for the effective function and integration of ESL students:

2.2.5.1 "it is self-evident that the student needs social language in order to function as a 'whole' person' within a foreign environment and culture. Furthermore, it seems likely that in many cases it is only when social adjustment has begun to take place that the student's psychological set is such that he can gain the

maximum benefit from the course of instruction he is following".

(Johnson and Morrow, 1976: 3)

2.2.6 This period of transition between the so-called "structural" and "communicative" language approaches is well-illustrated by a typical grid of grammatical starting-points - a teacher's structural check-list "not in any particular order of teaching" - produced by Glasgow's Language Teaching Centre (1976) with the instruction that "Children should have plenty of practice in asking questions and in the use of long and short forms". Here the underlying grammatical progression is traditional: the verb "to be - is, are, am", Simple Present, Possession, Imperative Verb Forms, Simple Past etc, but the suggested conceptual and lexical content relates to the ordinary experience of typical children, their social and school life: e.g.

2.2.6.1 "He needs to sharpen his pencil"

"They want to play football"

2.2.6.2 "I'm looking for Balvinder - have you seen her?"

"I'm looking for Iqbal - have you seen him?"

"I'm looking for Iqbal and Jagjeet - have you seen them?"

2.2.6.3 Teacher: "Tell him to sit down"

Pupil: "Sit down Ashraf"

Teacher: "Ask him to sit down"

Pupil: "Sit down please, Ashraf" and so on.

2.2.7 Experience gained through effective Second Language Teaching - motivated by immediate, recognisable requirement for real-life situations - could not but be of relevance to Language Teaching theory and practice in general (Derrick, op cit: 9). Thus initial pragmatic response to the needs of a multi-ethnic society may be said to have played its part in hastening the movement towards communicative language teaching, using the target language as the principal medium of instruction, which has become the ideal if not the norm in the majority of today's foreign language classrooms. Reliance on mother-tongue translation, explication and analysis, had been the experience of most foreign language-beginners, at least until the introduction of conversation sessions with a temporarily-seconded native-speaking "Mademoiselle" at the Intermediate and Advanced stages. But in the 1960's ESL class-room, speakers of several different minority languages were taught simultaneously, often by a native English-speaking teacher with little knowledge of any - let alone all - of the other languages represented, and before concepts such as "cultural integration" or "social acceptability" had lost their simplistic interpretation in terms of "assimilation into the dominant culture" (Derrick, op cit; Schools Council, op cit) - if indeed they have (McClure, 1983: 2). English (i.e. the "second" or "target" language) is taken for granted as the medium of teaching by practitioners such as Derrick.

2.2.8 The necessity to convey meaning without recourse to translation, at a time when activity-based learning was becoming accepted practice throughout the primary school (cf Daniel, 1947; Gagg, 1951; Hume, 1951 etc) no doubt helped to motivate a revolution in pedagogic techniques

and procedures: exploitation of language-learning opportunities, the use of dialogue, drama, visual aids, themes, structural drills disguised as games or activities, story-telling, rhymes, songs and singing games, and increasing efforts to dovetail language teaching and mainstream curriculum content - as illustrated by many schemes and teachers' handbooks published at the time in Britain (e.g. Palmer and Palmer, 1959; French, 1960; Billows, 1962; Lee, 1964; Allen, 1965; Stoddart and Stoddart, 1968; Dakin, 1968) and America (e.g. Pinocchiaro, 1958). While these latter relate in the main to the teaching of English as a Second Language it is interesting to note that European languages were also introduced, albeit on a limited scale, in selected British primary schools, using similar approaches (cf, for example, Kellerman, 1964).

2.2.9 Underlying the general atmosphere of educational change during the 1960's was the swing from 'behaviourist' theories of learning (including language learning) to the 'cognitive' approach. Skinner (1957) typifies the former theory of language not as a mental phenomenon but as a form of behaviour, whereby children learn to use adult speech patterns through a gradual process of habit-formation - imitation, reinforcement, repetition and, eventually, conditioning. Chomsky (1957) challenged this model with his hypothesis that individual languages and codes (i.e. observable verbal behaviour) are governed by complex rule-systems, subject both to universal and specific constraints, internalisation of which allows the native speaker to act creatively to produce an infinite number of previously unencountered utterances (i.e. linguistic 'competence') (Lyons, op cit, 1981: 22 - 23; Littlewood, 1984: 5). Thus the development of linguistic competence involves

abstracting from concrete examples of speech (the 'performance' of other people) an abstract knowledge of rules and the ability to recognise "deep" linguistic structures, often considerably at odds with their apparent "surface" structure (e.g. *"John is easy to please"*) (Littlewood, op cit: 5 - 6). According to Chomsky such a complex process could not be explained in terms of the behaviourist model - a sequence of imitation and memorisation:

2.2.9.1 "The stimulus-response, associationist theory is insufficient because it requires that the speaker select from a pre-existing response repertoire one of a finite number of responses on the basis of some previously established association. Such a model is incapable in principle of accounting for indefinitely diversified responses" (McLaughlin, op cit, 1978: 21).

2.2.10 Analysis and description of the structural properties of specific utterances suggests that linguistic competence involves internalisation of a large number of both highly abstract and highly specific factors. Chomsky emphasised the complexity of this process in relation to the speed with which normally developing young children acquire language, and the extent to which children seem to go through similar sequences in acquiring underlying linguistic rules and creatively developing their own rule-systems "which they gradually adapt in the direction of the adult system" (Littlewood, op cit: 6). And it appears that this process pertains to language acquisition in every known society:

2.2.10.1 "every language so far studied, no matter how primitive or uncivilised the society using it might appear to us in other respects, has proved upon investigation to be a complex and highly developed system of communication" (Lyons op cit: 27).

2.2.11 The difficulty of reconciling this complex model with the apparent ease with which infants normally acquire their first language led Chomsky to develop his theory of *Transformational Grammar* (cf McLaughlin, op cit: 22 - 23 for a useful summary) and his inference that human beings must be genetically endowed with knowledge of its arbitrary general principles (Lyons, op cit: 20). Chomsky argued that language acquisition occurs not so much as a result of experience as of "the general capacity for knowledge":

2.2.11.1 "that children cannot help constructing a particular kind of transformational grammar any more than they can control their perception of solid objects or their attention to line and angle...Experience will affect language development, but its ultimate form will be a function of those language universals that exist in the human mind" (McLaughlin, op cit: 24).

2.2.12 Chomsky's work, in emphasising the diversity of linguistic response and the inadequacy of reinforcement theory, "was the final nail in the behaviorist coffin" (McLaughlin, op cit: 21). However subsequent studies have taken issue with the transformational grammarians for their continuing preoccupation with syntax. For example Hymes (1970):

2.2.12.1 "There are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless" (Hymes, 1970, cited Johnson and Morrow: 2).

2.2.13 According to Hymes linguistic competence should be seen in communicative rather than grammatical terms: language as a living entity rather than a system, and structural understanding, or knowledge of the underlying grammatical system, as only one ingredient of communicative competence (ibid: 10). Similarly Braine (1971, cited McLaughlin, op cit: 24) observes that, in their interaction with their children, parents rarely correct grammar: "They are much more concerned with meaning and truthfulness than with syntax". In terms of "pedagogic" rather than "descriptive" grammar (Bell, op cit 1981: 30), where the priority is to seek models for syllabus design, classroom organisation and resource development for language teaching (ibid), such observations cannot be ignored. The mechanistic "stimulus - response" model of language acquisition favoured by the behaviourist school had found its application in practices designed to form automatic habits - imitation, drilling, mnemonics, revision etc - in the hopes that "the student would, at some point after an unspecified length of study, arrive at the stage at which the structures and phonological system had been established as habits and could focus on the message, allowing for real communication in the target language" (Krashen and Terrell, op cit: 14). Roulet (1972: 13) suggests that this type of course "actively discouraged the pupils' capacities for observation and analysis". It also gave rise to problems in sustaining motivation. Thus McLaughlin (op cit: 136) points out that the audio-lingual method (different aspects of which, ironically, made it attractive to



behaviourist and cognitive psychologists alike) lost its appeal to American students as the "fun and games" of the early stages developed into relentless drilling of the more complex structures. In any case it is inconceivable that real habit-formation (of the depth and complexity suggested by the language acquisition process) could be achieved through short-term practice of drills.

2.2.14 The behaviourist approach assumes that the learning process is cumulative, and that the order in which linguistic items should be learned is predictable: thus it has its realisation in "linear" *a priori* syllabuses Bell, op cit: 68 . Subsequent models have been more and more concerned with cognitive, or mentalistic aspects. process, store and retrieval of knowledge, making sense of data received through the senses, hypothesis testing, responding to new situations etc (Bell, op cit: 23ff; Littlewood, 1981: 3 - 4 . The cognitive approach stresses the individuality (a) of the learner in terms of his needs, previous knowledge, attitudes and goals, using individual interests to increase motivation, teaching culture as well as language etc (Bell, op cit: 68 - 69: as Klein, 1986: 6, points out, "Language is the medium through which the child acquires the cultural, moral, religious and other values of society"); and (b) of the learning situation in terms of individual and group characteristics and shared objectives, teacher-pupil relations, selection and criteria of managerial style etc (Bell, op cit: 32 - 33).

2.2.15 This approach has given rise to a variety of alternative and more dynamic *a priori* syllabus prototypes in a search for a formula or framework to permit "the systematic teaching of communicative skills and also

the coherent and consistent presentation of necessary structure"

Alexander, 1981: 16 . In place of the grammatical paradigms around which the structural syllabus <sup>was</sup> were designed, alternative inventories appear - items, such as "situations", "functions", and "notions", grouped thematically and ordered into language programmes according to criteria such as "importance for linguistic survival" or "topicality", "relevance" or "frequency of occurrence". Textbooks and schemes written in the recent past to assist practitioners in pursuing so-called "semantic" (as opposed to "structural") syllabuses (Johnson, 1981: 11 12) yield insight into changing attitudes - from language as a system of *forms* to language as a system of *meaning*. Bell, op cit: 55 . In the necessarily brief review which follows exempla are confined for convenience to ESL schemata.

2.2.16 The "situational" approach is typified in Ockenden (n.d.). Basically this might be described as a text-book version of oral audio-lingual methodology, comprising, in written form, the typical components of audio-lingual teaching as described by, for example, Krashen and Terrell (op cit: 13). As such it is an improvement on formal grammar-based textbooks, but contains all the limitations of audio-lingualism (indicated 4.3.13, above). Forty-four situations are presented, in the form of short thematically linked dialogues, and the student is asked to memorise as many as possible of the expressions and phrases which, the author points out, "are used time and again in these situations" (Ockenden, op cit, *iii*). Each dialogue is accompanied by a picture and preceded by a short informational paragraph, often relating to social or cultural concomitants of the

situation; drills are presented for additional practice of the structures and the importance of intonation is stressed, with assistance given to the student in terms of "falling tone, rising tone, falling-rising tone" etc. The situations presented fall into eight main categories: "transport", "food and drink", "in the town", "communication", "health", "greetings", "at home" and "general". Thus "health", for example, yields dialogues as follows:

2.2.16.1 "Asking about health" (dialogue 28)

2.2.16.2 "The doctor's surgery" (dialogue 29)

2.2.16.3 "At the chemist's shop" (dialogue 30)

2.2.16.4 "Meeting people after a long time" (dialogue 31)

2.2.17 It is self-evident that studiously following such a language course could at best produce only limited competence in a limited number of situations. As Bell (op cit: 54) points out, situational syllabuses are in fact grammatical syllabuses, in which situations are used to present and practise grammatical forms: practically speaking it is impossible to predict the future situations in which learners will need to use language, to list all the potential components of any hypothetical situation and the potential inter-relationships within it, or to predict the relationship between the situation and the appropriate language it requires, except for a few highly-ritualised uses such as greetings and leave-taking (Bell, op cit: 54).

2.2.18 The "*functional*" (and/or "*notional*") approach was developed largely as a result of the Council of Europe's pragmatic requirements for a syllabus design for language training of "the average adult European" (Johnson and Morrow, 1976: 7; cf also Richterich, 1972). This "very vague brief" (Johnson and Morrow, op cit) led to experimental notional-functional proto-syllabuses - "The Threshold Level" (Van Ek, 1975) and "Waystage" (Van Ek and Alexander, 1977) - aimed at (a) older school pupils and adults and (b) younger learners respectively. These attempted to define the language syllabus in terms of its "behavioural objectives" - "general contexts of use", "communicative skills" and "discourse types" (Van Ek, 1975: v). "The Threshold Level" (ibid: v - xv) is organised in the following terms:

2.2.18.1 (a) "*functions*" of language:

2.2.18.1.1 "imparting and seeking factual information" (e.g. identifying, enquiring, reporting, correcting etc

2.2.18.1.2 "expressing and finding out attitudes" (e.g. expressing and enquiring about agreement/disagreement, ability/inability, disappointment, preference, worry etc; offering/refusing to do something; apologising; expressing forgiveness, approval, disapproval etc)

2.2.18.1.3 "getting things done" (e.g. suggesting, inviting, advising, warning, instructing etc)

2.2.18.1.4 "socialising" (e.g. greeting, small talk, expressing gratitude or sympathy, congratulation, paying compliments etc)

2.2.18.5 "steering/structuring a conversation/text" (e.g. initiating or joining a conversation, beginning a letter, asking for repetition/explanation/clarification, changing the subject, ending a conversation, ending a letter etc)

2.2.18.2 (b) "*general notions*":

2.2.18.2.1 "deixis" (defined by Klein, 1986: 117, as "lexical units that point, but do not fully specify, elements of a particular situation") (e.g. personal reference - pronouns, conjugated prepositions; impersonal, relative, interrogative and spatial/temporal reference etc)

2.2.18.2.2 "notions of properties and qualities" (existential, spatial, temporal, quantitative and qualitative notions)

2.2.18.2.3 "notions of relations" (spatial, temporal, action/event, contrastive, possessive and logical relations) and

2.2.18.3 (c) "*specific notions*"

2.2.18.3.1 "personal identification" (e.g. name, address, marital status etc; likes/dislikes, character/temperament, health etc)

2.2.18.3.2 "house and home" (e.g. region, type of accommodation, rent, services, pets etc)

2.2.18.3.3 "education" (e.g. school organisation, curriculum, routine, etc)

2.2.18.3.4 "trades, professions, occupations" (e.g. looking for work, income, retirement etc)

and so on (Van Ek, op cit: v - xv).

2.2.19 The latter topics ("specific notions") are drawn up "on the basis of the characteristics of the target-group" (ibid: 14) with the caveat that "no matter how carefully a list of this kind is composed, it is bound to be far from complete." Indeed Van Ek admits that none of the sections is by any means exhaustive, and should not be thought of as "final or definitive" (ibid: 19). Historically this was a pilot project, and led, as predicted, to many subsequent functional/notional schemata (e.g. Jones, 1979; Little, 0 Murchú and Singleton, 1985) in which the teacher is increasingly encouraged to adopt an open-ended, individualised approach and the student typically addressed in such terms as the following:

22.2.19.1 "you must build up your own personal vocabulary and conversational techniques according to your needs and interests....don't expect to be corrected all the time - an English lesson gives you the chance to experiment with English, and if you are

always worried about making mistakes this is impossible" (Jones, op cit: 1).

2.2.20 The chief advantage of the notional or functional approach lies in its presentation of language within groupings which cross-cut various situations, thus, in theory, facilitating cross-referencing, reinforcement and transfer:

2.2.20.1 "In spite of its size this list is not to be considered exhaustive. It is assumed, however, that it is sufficiently comprehensive to produce - together with the other components of situation - specifications of language ability which will enable the learners to behave adequately also in various settings which have not been listed" and "it may be assumed that a learner who is competent to deal with the topics listed will also be able to deal with several other topics for which he has not necessarily been prepared" (Van Ek, op cit: 11, 14).

2.2.21 Its chief difficulty lies, as suggested by the defensiveness of Van Ek's two statements quoted above, in (a) predicting the future semantic needs of learners (what will they need to express) - in theory as global, complex and potentially ambiguous as situations within a situational syllabus - and (b) the difficulty of grading a syllabus of this (or indeed any other) type of non-structural *a priori* syllabus (Bell, op cit: 57 - 60). As understanding of most of the concepts (or notions) presented will already have been learned through the first language, especially as regards adult learners, what criterion of "easy/difficult to learn" can be applied?

(Bell op cit: 60). However it might be argued that in practice this apparent drawback encouraged the abandonment of linear development models typical of behaviourist theory, and encouraged a more "cyclical" or "spiral" syllabus in which the learner returns at intervals for more and more profound study of some aspect of language - a model much more reflective of cognitive learning processes (Bell, op cit: 68) and natural second language acquisition (i.e. outwith "formal" settings - language classes, open- or distance-learning courses etc):

2.2.21.1 "Natural learners do not follow a step-by-step progression through the separate parts of the system. They encompass the whole of the second language from the outset, but reduce it to a simpler system which excludes all but the most basic distinctions. Progress consists in 'filling out' this system with more and more distinctions, so that it becomes more and more refined as a means of communication" (Littlewood, op cit, 1984: 96).

2.2.22 Ultimately it hastened the realisation that the most meaningful type of syllabus grading is not based on *difficulty* at all, but on *utility* (Bell, op cit: 61) - the basic tenet of the "learner-centred" "communicative" approach (Littlewood, op cit: 1): what Bell (op cit: 70) calls "enlightened eclecticism". Before turning to this approach it is perhaps worth noting one last step in the evolutionary process - the development of "*multi-dimensional*" syllabus designs which acknowledge the value of all the fore-going typical units of organisation and vary their use as the course progresses according to the specific needs of the students (Johnson, op cit, 1981: 8 - 9). One such model is Ward, 1977 -



highly-recommended for any practitioner unwilling (or not permitted - by school policy or parental pressure) to make the quantum leap into the uncharted sea of *a posteriori* planning in which the learner is helped "to find his own way through the intellectual puzzle of language" (Bell, op cit: 63 - 67). Ward requires the teacher to ask three questions in planning lessons:

2.2.22.1 "Why do the children need to speak English?" (= function: typically "to identify themselves/to ask for help/to ask for directions/to hypothesise" etc

2.2.22.2 "What sort of sentence patterns and what vocabulary will the children need to use?" (= structure and lexis: typically "can I have a....?/ what's this? It's a...."/use of adjectives etc

2.2.22.3 "In which situations are the children going to need to speak English or what situations can the teacher use to illustrate and teach the chosen area of language?" (= situation) (Ward, op cit: 1)

2.2.23 According to Ward's model any of the above can be a starting point for a lesson:

2.2.23.1 "so one might start with a situation or activity (e.g. first year science, going shopping, visiting a zoo, etc) and then work out the language functions needed for that situation and then the appropriate structures and vocabulary. Similarly one could start with

a function, a structural area or a vocabulary area, and work out the implications of this choice" (ibid: 2).

## 2.3 COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

2.3.1 The *communicative* approach both represents and reflects a major shift in the emphasis of language study as a whole - communicative competence becomes the *aim* rather than the hoped-for *result* of syllabus design (Johnson and Morrow, 1981: 10) and therefore the content of the syllabus must be "genuine" communicative content - informative, educational and stimulating (Alexander, 1981: 23), not to be confused with the attractively disguised, but essentially trivial content of non-communicative courses:

2.3.1.1 "New EFL courses are supposedly made original or exciting by designers and artists and so they have become another consumer item which is principally distinguished by its packaging" (ibid: 23).

2.3.2 Hawkes (1981: 36) defines the types of emphasis required by a communicative language course as task, or activity, orientation, and relevance to the learner within his own specific social and educational environment. Dialogues and statements are invited which are "true-for-me"; questions and answers have "genuine" informational or emotive motivation; games have "a point"; songs are "enjoyable": in every element the functional value of language learning is self-evident (ibid: 36). This approach has obvious advantages: communicative activities lead to whole-task experience, improve motivation by giving *reason* to the communication, and allow "natural learning":

2.3.2.1 "Language learning takes place inside the learner, and, as teachers know to their frequent frustration, many aspects of it are beyond their pedagogical control. It is likely in fact that many aspects of language learning can only take place through natural processes, which operate when a person is involved in using the language for communication" (Littlewood, 1981: 17 - 18).

2.3.3 Thus the activity becomes learner directed, with the teacher's rôle becoming less dominant - creating the context, constituting a source of guidance and psychological support, a monitor of strengths and weaknesses, a co-communicator....(ibid: 18), although sometimes asserting a more immediate influence, as in discouraging the use of the mother-tongue or helping to eradicate fixed errors (ibid). The communicative approach also places emphasis on the language of social interaction - through simulation and rôle-play - from minimal levels of appropriateness (e.g. grammatical accuracy and the avoidance of offence) to maximal (levels of formality and so on) (ibid).

2.3.4 Bell (op cit: 46) summarises the general trend in educational development over the past fifty years in the following (perhaps somewhat idealistic) terms:

2.3.4.1 "we have seen dramatic changes in teacher and learner activity, beginning....with highly active teachers and sullen passive learners and ending with teachers and learners working together towards a mutually agreed goal".

2.3.5 He points out that the problems of pre-planning a comprehensive language curriculum are not new, citing Ticknor's statement of 1832: "There is no mode of teaching languages to persons of all the different ages and different degrees of preparation who present themselves to be taught" (ibid: 30) and recommends that, as far as possible, practitioners should try to avoid *a priori* syllabuses altogether and approach the task of language teaching *a posteriori*, building small scale, short-term syllabuses on the basis of his learners' errors; thereafter, by discovering the system the learner is using, providing constructive feedback which will allow him to modify his system in the direction of the norms of the target language (ibid: 61).

2.3.6 However such radical changes of attitude are not easy to market to the practitioner, beset by practical constraints (class-pupil ratio, parental attitude, and, above all, the requirements of language departments for written validation of approach, pupil assessment etc). And the methods by which educationists themselves were taught are tenacious and hard to abandon altogether, however much the packaging may alter, as is indicated by Swan, writing within a book devoted to different aspects of communicative language teaching (Johnson and Morrow, 1981). :

2.3.6.1 "To ask whether a structural or semantic syllabus is 'better' is like asking 'shall I practise scales or play the Mendelssohn concerto?'....a semantic syllabus no more replaces a structural syllabus than a structural syllabus replaces a phonological syllabus, or than a road-map replaces an internal combustion engine. Structures

still have to be learned, and they have not mysteriously become easier over the last few years" (Swan, 1981: 40).

2.3.7 This is, of course, something of an over-statement: communicative language techniques and grammatical correctness are not mutually exclusive - insofar as reasonably intelligible usage is a prerequisite for successful communication. But both the central aims and the theoretical basis of the structural syllabus differ fundamentally from those of the communicative approach. Thus Littlewood (1981:1) emphasises the importance of understanding the cognitive processes involved in first language acquisition: the native speaker's intuitive knowledge of structures enables him to make up new structures which match his desired meaning (Littlewood, op cit) and similarly the learner should be assisted to develop strategies for understanding and interpreting the variable relation between forms and functions (ibid: 3). The central paradox is expressed by Morrow (1981):

2.3.7.1 "Even a teacher who adopts a totally communicative approach must accept that grammatical and phonological mistakes hamper communication, and enough of them - especially in the wrong place - can totally destroy it...." (but)..."Trying to express something you are not quite sure how to say is a vital feature of using a foreign language.....Niggling criticism of what he produces will ultimately destroy the learner's confidence in his ability to use the language. If these two statements sound contradictory, then it is perhaps because they are..." (Morrow, op cit, quoted Betteridge, 1981: 7).

2.3.8 Krashen, on the other hand, departs even further from the structural syllabus, basing his thesis not only on first language acquisition theory but also on observation of relatively low rates of success (i.e. language competence) even among students learning through ostensibly "communicative" methods:

2.3.8.1 "The mistake the innovators have made is to assume that a conscious understanding of grammar is a prerequisite to acquiring communicative competence. That such an understanding might be helpful in some situations for some students is not in question - that it is a prerequisite for all students is patently false. Thus any grammar-based method which purports to develop communication skills will fail with the majority of students. Only a few will be able to work their way through a grammar course, be it grammar-translation, audiolingual or cognitive, and persevere long enough finally to put themselves in communicative situations and acquire the competence they have been striving for....most students never make it through this ordeal" (Krashen and Terrell, op cit: 16).

2.3.9 The study of first language acquisition would seem an obvious basis upon which to construct strategies for second language learning: that this has not until recently been generally accepted by practitioners is no accident. Available scientific research has been confined primarily to "guided" learning and, to a lesser extent, Second Language acquisition in childhood: findings in the latter area have been notoriously anecdotal in nature owing largely to the difficulty of testing children's language empirically (McLaughlin, 1987, op cit: 5); the former, presenting a

"captive" sample in schools and colleges, has encouraged a plethora of research projects by its relative facility in identifying and testing measurable aims (Klein, 1986: 18). The general expectation has been that such studies will produce evidence of particular value to language teachers - a hypothesis which Klein (op cit) calls "a deplorable fallacy":

2.3.9.1 "It appears that any attempt at aiding the process of language acquisition must be based on a sound knowledge of the underlying mechanisms, or the laws that govern the process. It seems quite problematic to try to identify these mechanisms when their operation is modified by the application of a particular method of instruction (no matter whether its effect is positive or negative)" (Klein, op cit: 18 - 19).

2.3.10 Krashen (1981:1) distinguishes between language *acquisition* and language *learning* (the first subconscious, the second, conscious, or, as Klein puts it, the first *spontaneous*, the second *guided* - op cit: 20). But, Klein postulates, there is no clear evidence that the processes are basically different (ibid). "What is important that both terms refer to the *perspective of the learner*, not the teacher or the social environment" (ibid) - and Krashen's work (Krashen and Terrell, op cit; Krashen, 1981; Krashen, 1982) suggests complete sympathy with this fundamental starting point. His "*monitor hypothesis*" (described in detail in all the works referred to above) postulates a process of self-correction - the use of conscious grammatical rules by second language learners in regulating, correcting and even, in some cases generating their own utterances under certain circumstances and with certain necessary pre-conditions: *time* (to



think about the rules); *focus on form* (the performer must be attending to correctness at the time); and *knowledge of the rule* ("a very formidable requirement") (Krashen, 1982: 15 - 18).

2.3.11 Klein feels that the validity of these assumptions is "open to debate" but if the theory is correct, it "carries important implications for language instruction" (Klein, op cit: 28). Again, however, Krashen's practical suggestions for facilitating "language acquisition in the classroom" (Krashen and Terrell, op cit) are basically in tune with Klein's theoretical psycholinguistic thesis:

2.3.11.1 "The human mode of language processing - including first and second language acquisition, has evolved over millennia; organised instruction is a recent phenomenon historically. Human beings have thus acquired the ability to learn a language, and, as a special case, a second language, in actual communication, and we have no reason to assume that this ability can be freely manipulated, although there are surely points at which successful intervention is possible. Granted this, we may also assume that the human language learning ability resists the various methods of instruction to varying degrees" (Klein, op cit: 19).

2.3.12 The *natural approach* as described by Krashen and Terrell (op cit) involves the provision of maximum linguistic input which is both meaningful and intelligible (Krashen and Terrell, op cit: 17): acquisition can only take place when the listener understands the message in the target language: "we acquire when we focus on *what* is being said, rather than on

how it is said" (ibid: 19). But comprehensibility is not the only prerequisite: the listener also has to be "open" to the input - i.e. to have the three components of what Krashen calls "low affective filter":

2.3.12.1 (a) positive orientation towards the speaker(s)

2.3.12.2 (b) low anxiety level

2.3.12.3 (c) some degree of self-confidence (ibid: 19 - 20)

2.3.13 To keep the affective filter low, input should considerably precede output - i.e. "comprehension precedes production" - and "production is allowed to emerge in stages" (ibid: 20). The content of the syllabus should also be designed in such a way as to, as one might put it, take the students' minds off the language (i.e. "keep the affective filter low") - by being interesting, relevant, encouraging the uninhibited expression of ideas and opinions, desires and feelings. And the classroom environment should create good rapport and friendly relationships:

2.3.14.1 "Such an atmosphere is not a luxury but a necessity" (ibid: 21).

2.3.15 Modern language teaching in Scottish schools These aims appear to be well accepted in Scottish foreign language classes. Carnachan's (1989, in process of publication) statement of the aims of language teaching in Scottish schools may be summarised as follows:

2.3.15.1 to develop communicative competence ("promotion of real language in real use")

2.3.15.2 to develop pupil confidence ("an atmosphere of trust...where pupils will be willing to take risks....and...interact with the teacher, their peers and eventually with native speakers")

2.3.15.3 to stress positive achievement (students to be encouraged to monitor their own performance, short-term targets, a sense of achievement...)

2.3.15.4 to develop awareness about language and communication (discovering how language works, encouraging them to speculate and to draw conclusions)

2.3.15.5 to develop cultural awareness (broaden horizons, share enthusiasms for things different, counter stereotypes)

2.3.15.6 to develop social skills (expressing own meanings, sharing interests, opinions and feelings)

2.3.15.7 to offer a sense of achievement and intellectual stimulation ("achieve full potential...stretch")

## 2.4 GAEILIC TEACHING

2.4.1 **Primary** Behind all the foregoing lies the assumption that the language classroom is - or may be created into - a suitable context for the provision of linguistic input: it may even, as Krashen suggests (Krashen 1982, *op cit*: 58) constitute an *optimal* context as regards *comprehensible* input - having regard for the level of competence of the students. However there is an inevitable element of "make-believe" about the discrete language lesson. Klein (*op cit*: 21) talks about the difficulties of constructing quasi real-life conditions for the application of linguistic repertoire in comprehension and/or production. In spontaneous acquisition the learner is under constant pressure to utilise his entire repertoire in order to communicate successfully, whereas in the classroom this pressure does not exist and every communicative act is therefore essentially "an exercise". Klein likens this to a learner driver practising gear-changes without moving the car:

2.4.1.1 "Even in rôle-playing - which might appear to be a kindred approach - the real objective is not so much communication at any price as behaviour in keeping with a pre-established and not always fully internalised norm" (*ibid*).

2.4.2 In some senses the transmission of second languages would seem even more fraught with logistic problems in the primary classroom: the younger the child the harder it is to motivate him/her with discussion of the long-term benefits of language learning; to predict his/her possible future second language needs; to deflect the logic which says that the teacher is

perfectly capable of speaking the child's first language, so why doesn't he? Wright and Betteridge (op cit: 16) refer to a language conference in Uppsala in 1972, in which concern was expressed over the current state of foreign language teaching in primary schools throughout Europe. Its conclusions were summarised as follows:

2.4.2.1 "There is an increasing demand that foreign language teaching should be an integral part of the curriculum, both in terms of the content and in the manner in which the children are expected to learn" (Stern, 1972, quoted Wright and Betteridge, op cit: 16).

2.4.3 If such could not be achieved, it was considered that foreign language teaching would be better dropped from the primary curriculum altogether - "a defeatist attitude" that "would be unthinkable in other areas of the primary school curriculum - where any shortcomings usually serve to stimulate calls for improvement rather than calls for retreat" (Wright and Betteridge, op cit). The language course "*Kaleidoscope*", in the writing of which Wright and Betteridge were subsequently involved, was a conscious attempt to reflect both the preoccupations of young children and the typical approach and content of other primary curricular areas - ironically its immediate relevance to evanescent 1970's "weeny-bopper" culture renders the course virtually unusable today. Dunn's "*Developing English with young learners*" (1984) is another example of the attempt to integrate language into mainstream primary teaching: it is in effect a rather basic infant "language arts" text-book, apparently largely based on the general recommendations of the Bullock Report (Bullock, 1975, cited Dunn, op cit: 84). It deals with the development of children's skills in

reading, writing, listening and talking, with all the expected ingredients, from word-books and news-time to picture lotto and the house corner. Again the language games described by Lee (1980) and Wright and Buckley (1984) could be used to equally good effect in increasing the communicative *first* language skills of youngsters in any primary class-room - and many of them are; and more radical, "creative" approaches to second language teaching (e.g. "*Towards the creative teaching of English*" - Spaventa, 1980) comprise intrinsically the same methods as enterprising primary teachers employ as a matter of course within their language and/or "expressive" arts programmes - dramatic improvisation, musical composition etc. - in mainstream first language classrooms.

2.4.4 Thus it seems that, from a theoretical standpoint, the holistic approach of "immersion" and "bilingual" (or Gaelic-medium) programmes, offered to predominantly non-native speakers in Gaelic primary units, comes nearer to the ideal of "natural" acquisition conditions than discrete second language lessons - quite apart from practical advantages such as increased duration of exposure to the second language. Although as yet there is no pre-service training to equip staff as language teachers *per se*, the conditions under which they are required to operate naturally direct them towards the types of technique suggested by Krashen et al. Thus they begin working more or less exclusively through the medium of the second language when the children are as young as four or five years old - when an element of modification and/or simplification of normal adult linguistic usage is both inevitable and, acceptable ("caretaker" and "roughly-tuned" speech, gradually and naturally increasing in complexity as the child's competence develops: Krashen, 1982: 22-24). Similarly the

conceptual and physical development of the children can proceed in tandem with their linguistic development - suitably "here-and-now" concepts and "total physical response" activities can be introduced without any departure from the norms of infant class practice, without risk of condescension, and with minimum rise in the "affective filter" (cf Krashen, op cit). The skills the children learn through the second language are the same as they would learn in the "ordinary" infant classroom, and so the children are motivated by all the normal expectations of society, their peers and parents, to use the language through which they will gain access to literacy and numeracy. A more thoroughly "task-orientated" approach is hard to imagine.

2.4.5 Again, production in the second language at this early age seems far less likely to be inhibited by over-use of Krashen's internal "monitor" (i.e. the desire to be grammatically correct and converse fear of failure or ridicule) or indeed by over-conscientious external "monitoring" by the teacher or peer-group; and fear of the loss of social identity, which has been blamed for the failure of some adults to acquire full second language competence, especially as regards pronunciation (Klein, op cit: 10), is unlikely to occur in children this young, whose parents are typically highly supportive of what the adults construe as access to their "lost Scots heritage". Perhaps most importantly the infant classroom presents a "polymorphous language context of which language teachers can only dream - or attempt to simulate through self-conscious rôle-play" (Gillies, 1989c: in process of publication). Children of this age not only introduce almost every known form of human behaviour, social and anti-social, public and intimate, real and imaginary, into the classroom as a matter of everyday

course, but also are usually quite uninhibited in discussing it in detail. And their rôle-play (in house corner or shop, with cars or dolls or dressing-up clothes or activity songs) is far removed from the type of "standstill gear-changing" exercises described by Klein (above): to infants rôle-play is the reality of the moment, and produces communicative needs which as urgently require satisfaction as their real-life equivalents.

2.4.6 There is little empirical evidence to support Lenneberg's theory of a *critical period* for language acquisition (1967, cited Klein, op cit: 8 - 10): that physiologically the brain is predisposed, by reason of its plasticity, to language acquisition in young pre-pubertal children - more so than at any point in later life. Nevertheless observations such as the above give weight to the suggestion there may be other arguments in favour of early introduction of second languages - that strictly biological evidence may be replaced or supplemented by developmental factors of a social nature (Klein, op cit). For all the foregoing reasons Gaelic primary units might be regarded not at all as recidivist or sentimental "heritage" exercises but as a fairly revolutionary application of advanced pedagogic linguistic theory within, in many respects and in most instances, near-optimal circumstances for "natural" second language acquisition in a classroom context (Gillies, 1989c, op cit).

2.4.7 **Secondary and adult** As regards the teaching of Gaelic as a second language in secondary schools and further education, two points require examination: (a) there has undoubtedly been growing acknowledgement, especially in teacher training colleges, of the need for a more communicative approach but (b) in at least some instances it appears that



real pedagogic change in the classroom has been considerably slower in coming about. Of course this may also be true of foreign language teaching: there is no guarantee of correspondence between the philosophical testimony of a Regional Language Adviser - cf Carnachan, above - and the actual practice of class teachers, of all ages and in all regions or schools. However Gaelic has been subject to certain specific constraints whose influence must be taken into account if (a) the present situation is to improve and (b) the historical significance of Gaelic-medium primary initiatives to be fully appreciated.

2.4.8 In 1976 the Cambridge National Extension College produced its adult learners' course "Gàidhlig Bheò" ("Living Gaelic") intended to take complete beginners to Scottish Certificate of Education Gaelic "O-grade" (learners) level by means of course-book, tapes and follow-up exercises through the correspondence tutorial method. It is, incidentally, reputed to have been one of the most popular courses in the College's history and is still used as a basis for teaching in F.E. classes, largely because of the lack of alternatives. (However, Montgomery points out, 1989: 48, that this situation is changing with the introduction of newer courses, not before time, according to a lecturer at Jordanhill College of Education - one of the two sources of Gaelic secondary school teachers in Scotland:

2.4.8.1 "We must not forget the thousands who have turned their backs on Gaelic as a result of their fruitless labours in attempting to master reading, writing and the over scholarly examinations of the Scottish Examination Board" - Taylor, 1988, quoted Montgomery, *op cit*).

2.4.9 In the introduction to "Gàidhlig Bheò" the author (who was himself Principal Lecturer in Gaelic at Jordanhill College) states his worthy intentions:

2.4.9.1 "Our aim is to extend the knowledge of Gaelic so that many more people will be able to communicate in the language. We'll teach you to use Gaelic - to understand it, to speak it, to read it and to write it" (MacDonald, 1976: 1).

2.4.10 There is a "unifying theme" running through all the units - "a typical crofting family" whom the learner meets, with their friends, "in many different situations, both in the printed text and on the tapes" (ibid). However, examination of the text reveals the course to be thoroughly grammar-based and the family to be far from "typical", to judge by the meaningless exchanges in which they engage. For example:

2.4.10.1 *Alasdair* "A bheil bainne air a' bhòrd?"  
(*"Is there milk on the table?"*)

*Anna* "Tha"  
(*"Yes"*)

*Alasdair* "A bheil aran air a' bhòrd?"  
(*"Is there bread on the table?"*)

*Anna* "Tha"

*("Yes)*

*Alasdair* "A bheil im air an aran?"

*(Is there butter on the bread?)*

*Anna* "Chan eil. Tha an t-im air a' bhòrd"

*("No. The butter is on the table")*

*Alasdair* "Dè tha air a' mhuir?"

*(What is on the sea?)*

*Anna* "Tha bàta mòr air a' mhuir"

*(There is a big boat on the sea")*

*Alasdair* "A bheil bàta air a' chladach?"

*("Is there a boat on the shore?)*

*Anna* "Tha. Tha bàta beag air a' chladach"

*("Yes. There is a little boat on the shore")*

And so on (*ibid*: 9).

2.4.11 In 1979 the BBC gave the first screening to its equally popular and, subsequently, equally over-utilised learners' programme "Can Seo" ("Say This") (MacKinnon, 1986/87: 13 gives a handy check-list of such historical mile-stones). The programme was based on the functional/notional approach, and was, in its time, as successful as any such course can be

within the limitations of time, unpredictability of future needs, artificiality of some of the social contexts, given the paucity of public situations in which Gaelic appears as a frequent, let alone the principal medium of interaction (compare, for example, Hawkes, 1981: 34 - 35, on similar logistic conundrums encountered in English language teaching in Africa and the Arabian Gulf). What appears most relevant to the present thesis is that "Can Seo" too is still used, despite dating as regards both televisual technique and language teaching philosophy, as a basis for F.E. Gaelic classes - again, for lack of alternatives (Montgomery, op cit: 81) and, it may be suggested, a certain element of over-reliance among practitioners on structured or semi-structured written courses. There are many possible explanations for such reliance, and an almost complete absence of empirical research in the field (Montgomery, op cit: 94). Certainly Montgomery's study indicates that there is cause for concern:

2.4.11.1 "The emphasis placed by learners on the need for resource materials for learning, access to modern technology with opportunities for learners themselves to have some control over its use, choice in methods of learning, goal-based teaching/learning with certification, government recognition through the financing of Gaelic education for adults - all indicate learners' serious concern with what they are doing" (ibid: 81).

2.4.12 Gaelic secondary teachers are required by General Teaching Council of Scotland ruling to be graduates, with Gaelic as one of their principal University subjects and suitable post-graduate certification in Gaelic from

a validated College of Education. University entrance regulations require that students of Celtic should have studied Gaelic to Higher level. Traditionally the majority of secondary schools time-table Gaelic against French; prior study of French is traditionally a prerequisite for the study of further foreign languages at secondary school.... Thus, historically speaking, a vicious circle emerges whereby the typical Gaelic teacher (and College lecturer) has been a native bilingual with no first-hand experience of the process involved in formally learning any second language except, perhaps, classical languages. It would seem impossible that such a situation has not radically affected pedagogic development in the past, or that its effects have not been exacerbated by the isolation of school Gaelic departments from their larger, better-resourced and more dynamic "modern" language counterparts. These points are more fully developed in Gillies, 1989c, and Dunn and Robertson (1989: 44 - 55) give a valuable resumé of more recent developments in terms of communicative Standard-grade examination courses, vocationally-orientated modular learning and the catalytic recommendations of agencies such as the SCCC and SCOTRES (Scottish Resources in Schools).

2.4.13 Of greater relevance to the present thesis, however, has been the impact of the upward thrust of Gaelic-medium primary teaching and the extension of Gaelic as a medium of education across other curricular areas in the secondary school (Dunn and Robertson, op cit: 48 - 49). This has occurred to some extent not only in a few predominantly Gaelic-speaking secondary schools in the Western Isles but also in Glasgow, where to date all the pupils concerned have been second language Gaelic learners, and where Strathclyde Regional Council has taken careful note of parental

wishes in timetabling in such a way as to allow pupils to study French and/or German as well as Gaelic. Similar development is anticipated in Highland Region as pupils currently in Gaelic-medium primary Units transfer to secondary. It would seem that with time this movement - radiating from a few Gaelic Units in a handful of primary schools - may radically alter the nature of secondary Gaelic provision and pedagogy; examination vehicles; teacher training; and, eventually, the highly academic, "classical literary" and philological emphasis which survives in some University Celtic departments (Fraser, 1988).

## 2.5 BILINGUAL EDUCATION

2.5.1 Introduction As Ferguson has pointed out (1977: 9), *all languages change in the course of time; all speech communities alter "in respect of the functional allocations of the varieties of language used in them"*. Most such change or functional alteration is unconscious and gradual; but in some instances the language users' own evaluation of the desirability or utility of accepted norms may lead to deliberate attempts to affect the course of linguistic change. Such attempts may aim at innovation or preservation of forms. They may relate to isolated and/or trivial examples or they may be wholesale and systematic (ibid: 9 - 10). The former is exemplified by the acceptance or rejection of, say, slang or loan-words, while the gradual reestablishment of English in 14th - 16th century England - as the language of state, court, education and usage across all strata of society - would seem a particularly apposite example of the latter (Ellis and Mac a' Ghobhainn (1974: 33 - 41). (The authors give many other examples of dying or suppressed languages revitalised and given new status by deliberate activist measures).

2.5.2 Nowadays the functional change which most often becomes the focus of political pressure and/or government policy at national level is the medium of instruction in the education system:

2.5.2.1 "and there can be little doubt that shifts in this allocation can have far-reaching consequences in the structure of the languages involved, in the patterns of communication in the nation, and in the

broader political processes within which language policy decisions take place" (Ferguson, op cit: 12).

2.5.3 In global terms, multi-lingual societies are not the exception but the norm (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988: 10 - 11):

2.5.3.1 "It is inevitable that most countries should be multilingual: the number of independent countries is less than 200, while the number of languages spoken in the world probably is between 4,000 and 5,000, depending on how a language is defined" (ibid: 11)

2.5.4 Thus, paradoxically, the growing use of, say, English as an international *lingua franca* for commerce, science and technology, increases rather than diminishes bilingualism world-wide - English (or French, Russian, or Japanese) taking its place alongside existent indigenous languages. At national level similar processes may have unpredictable results, as governments attempt to impose a standard language - not infrequently causing a reaction among affected minorities, who become galvanised into demanding counter-measures to preserve their ethnic identity (McLaughlin, 1978: 1). Gaelic-speakers have sometimes been criticised for their apparent lack of resistance to this process in the past (e.g. Mulholland, "*Gaelic giving up without a fight*" 'Glasgow Herald' 4.5.89) and for the apparent apathy with which many seem to respond to more recent measures to rectify the historical damage (ibid). An attempt has been made in 1.1 and 1.2 above to shed some light on this phenomenon from a historical point of view: further understanding may be gained from



reviewing some of the more recent comparative sociolinguistic findings - it is a huge field, and what follows is necessarily a "lucky dip".

2.5.5 Problems of bilingualism Bilingualism has commonly been referred to as a "problem" - or at best as a phenomenon bringing problems in its wake - both social (e.g. McLaughlin, op cit) and psycholinguistic (e.g. MacLeod, 1969). Efforts to serve the educational interests of bilingual communities have all-too-often been approached in the same spirit - as an additional (and expensive) administrative head-ache which, it is hoped, will disappear with time and the spread of manageable homogeneity. This type of thinking (which Skutnabb-Kangas describes as *linguicism* - op cit: 13) leads to education programmes which treat bilingualism (both societal and individual) as a *transitional*, rather than a *stable* phenomenon, and its effects may be all the more pernicious for the overt rationality in which it is typically clothed:

2.5.5.1 "just as colonialism has been superseded by more sophisticated forms of exploitation, the crudely biological racist ideology has been superseded by ethnicism...and linguicism. The 'higher and better view' of the West is now less represented by the gun and the Bible than by technology and the textbook" (Phillipson, 1988: 341).

2.5.6 Overt conflict can be more easily overcome than more subtle forms of devaluation. Chamot, for example (1988: 17), demonstrates only too clearly the priorities of overtly multicultural American education in real terms: out of a total of almost \$95,000,000 spent on grant-aid to special

bilingual education programmes of various types during 1985 - 6, over \$77,000,000 was spent on transitional programmes, as opposed to a mere \$250,000 on "Developmental Bilingual Education". Language is an essential and intimate ingredient of cultural identity - therefore the feelings aroused in linguistic confrontation of any kind are liable to irrationality on either side, including that of an apparently benevolent majority (both official representatives and ordinary members of society) who may unconsciously construe dual linguistic allegiance as a form of disloyalty and potential disruption of the *status quo*:

2.5.6.1 "although official....policies generally assert the close connection between language and culture, many advocates of 'multicultural education' are highly ambivalent about heritage language programmes which they see as being divisive and as erecting intercultural barriers rather than breaking them down" (Cummins, 1988: 131).

2.5.7 Where monoculturalism is the historical norm, assimilation and/or homogenisation the official policy, minority or ethnic identity may be perceived as a social stigma and even, in some instances, an economic liability (McLaughlin, *op cit*: 2 - 4). Language, although not in itself the crucial issue, is a convenient "marker" - representing and reinforcing cultural dichotomies, the existence of two disparate communities which the minority must negotiate beneath the critical stare of the majority (ibid) - a "problem" indeed in everyday terms. By definition the majority holds the trump-cards - political, administrative, educational, professional (Smolicz, 1979: 4) and may use them in accordance with their own

preconceptions without, perhaps, fully realising the extent of the losses they thus inflict:

2.5.7.1 "The assumption, once prevalent and not yet eradicated, that the function of the educational system in dealing with speakers of immigrant languages is simply to acclimatise them in the majority culture is, beyond question, hopelessly misguided. Such a policy leads not only to the wilful neglect of a potential source of interest and enlightenment to the community as a whole, but, still more importantly, to confusion and alienation for the members of immigrant groups" (McClure, 1983: 2).

2.5.8 Small wonder that, for many members of the minority itself, assimilation - the adoption of efficient cultural camouflage in the first generation, completion of the process by the second - becomes the line of least resistance. The Finnish community in Sweden provides a particularly trenchant example of this process in action, in a situation where neither cultural nor physical difference seems to play a major, if any, part:

2.5.8.1 "Finland and Sweden have similar laws, customs and religious and educational systems, and there is economic and cultural interaction between the two countries. All the adult immigrants to Sweden have at least six years of schooling behind them and about half have a professional qualification in Finland. They can easily listen to Finnish radio programmes in Sweden and can buy their own magazines and newspapers" (Kerr, 1984: 175)

2.5.9 Yet, comprising 2% of the total Swedish population, the Finns typically end up in "the heavier and less pleasant jobs with lower wages and more shift-working: the jobs that Swedes do not want" (ibid). There are negative attitudes on both sides: an attitude survey conducted among 900 Swedes found that the Finns were considered to be "rowdy, untrustworthy, introverted, careless, but hardworking" (Trankell, 1975, cited Kerr, op cit). Linguistically this produces a parlous situation for the children. The Finnish language is in no way related to Swedish, belonging instead to a tiny group which includes Hungarian and, Kerr asserts:

2.5.9.1 "Many adults never achieve fluent Swedish, while their children forget Finnish because they respond to the pressures of peers and society at large and aspire to join the higher-status group. They become ashamed of their language, and as they lose their facility in it they also lose the ability to communicate with their parents on any but an everyday level" (Kerr, op cit: 175).

2.5.10 Indeed according to research by Skutnabb-Kangas and Toukomaa (1976, cited Kerr, 176 - 177) many Finnish children in Sweden do not acquire average proficiency in any language. While performance on non-verbal tests equaled with the performance of control groups, the migrant children (aged between seven and sixteen) scored significantly lower on verbal tests - both in Swedish and Finnish - as compared with non-migrant controls in Sweden and Finland respectively. Since this data was collated much has been done to ensure that Sweden's educational system more appropriately reflects the high proportion of immigrant children - one in ten according to Kotsinas (1988: 129) - in terms of mother-tongue teaching programmes.

Largely, it appears, as the result of a school strike by Finnish children (Honkala et al, 1988: 239ff) the Swedish approach to Finnish minority education now appears more enlightened (Johannesson, 1976, quoted Kerr, op cit: 179 - 181) and the results seem fairly encouraging (Kerr, op cit: 184 - 5) - though still limited by the relative status of the minority language:

2.5.10.1 "I believe that mother tongues must be made compulsory in schools - it's the only way to give them the same status as other subjects" - Öberg, 1978, quoted Kerr, op cit).

2.5.11 Thus where multiculturalism is the official policy, minority group cultures may be encouraged - particularly via education - as "a compensatory rehumanising contribution to our industrialised mass culture" (Christian and Sharp, 1972: quoted McLaughlin, 1978: 4). But schemes based solely or predominantly on the principle of "enrichment" may fail to convince members of the minority itself. As Rubin points out (1983: 5):

2.5.11.1 "a programme which changes the school without changing the society is aimed only at the symptom and not at the cause of the problem".

2.5.12 Thus, it is suggested, official attention to purely educational programmes may "distract from the the solution of real socio-political problems faced by minority groups" (Bullivant, 1981, cited Edwards, 1988: 206). Chamot (op cit: 14) points out that a considerable number of American minority group parents joined in the backlash of criticism against

the implementation of the U.S. Bilingual Education Act (1974), for reasons both educational ("*it delays the acquisition of English*") and societal ("*it fosters political divisiveness*"). Other writers (e.g. Breton, Reitz and Valentine, 1980, cited Edwards, op cit) have suggested that national governments can and sometimes do adopt an overtly pluralistic stance - especially as regards the provision of multicultural education programmes - "as a way of keeping minorities subordinated while *appearing* to attend to their needs...."

2.5.12.1 "....it is apparent that, very often, the school is essentially being asked to counteract, or even to reverse, larger societal dynamics. There is little evidence that schools, which tend to reflect the larger society rather than to lead it, can significantly affect minority-group language and identity. There can be, in other words, too much emphasis on what schools alone can do, given that their efforts are often dwarfed by social pressures outside their gates" (Edwards, op cit).

2.5.13 As Paulston (1983: 63) puts it: "societies will typically blame the schools, the teacher, the method, for matters that are symptomatic of social ills and beyond the control of any individual" - a viewpoint which is echoed in a statement made about current Gaelic educational initiatives, by a commentator living in the Western Isles, far from the political and economic centre of gravity:

2.5.13.1 "*You see it's a cheap way of doing it, because the effective way of keeping Gaelic alive would be to put it on television and radio*

*but they don't do that...The point is that the policy would be fine if the children were going to stay here, but in fact the State is on the other hand, forcing them out of living here, so unless it gives them a facility in English they're going to go out into the world ill-equipped" (anonymous Lewisman, quoted in "The Scottish Child", vol 1, issue 2: 1987).*

2.5.14 Gaelic history seems to be mirrored in parts of present-day South America, where the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), has attempted to stimulate interest in bilingual education, working through the government to coordinate its vernacular literacy programmes with those already in existence - if any: in Bolivia, for example, the vernacular has been seen as at best "a bridge to the dominant language" (Spanish), at worst "a barrier to learning" (Briggs, 1983: 85). Children are commonly taught to "read" Spanish before they understand it and the incidence of poor school attendance and drop-out is high, especially in rural areas where the home-language is not Spanish (ibid) - just as in the Gàidhealtachd in the 19th century (Durkacz, 1983, op cit: 169). The underlying motivation of SIL, as of the SSPCK in 18th - 19th century Scotland, is evangelistic: "the translation of the Bible into all the languages of the world" with bilingual education emerging as "an outgrowth of the primary objective" (Briggs, op cit: 85): "Critics allege that that the primary purpose of SIL is not conducive to developing community initiative sufficient to carry on where SIL leaves off. The fact remains that SIL has provided literacy skills and materials in previously unwritten languages in many parts of the world" (Briggs, op cit: 86)

2.5.15 The problems inherent in such initiatives, however, whether instigated by independent agencies or by government administration, derive from their being imposed from outwith the indigenous community and their failure to address the central social and economic problems inherent within such communities. Language planning of any kind must thoroughly understand "the interdependency between developing language, education, communication, and the economy" (das Gupta and Ferguson, 1977: 4) if it is not to result in frustration and waste of energy:

2.5.15.1 "The language problem must arise from the social setting; the need must somehow be felt by the target or client group; the advantages must be perceived by them or else the problem is not really a problem and no amount of planning can change the situation" (Rubin, 1984: 5)

2.5.16 Thus, as highlighted by Carpenter (1983) in his report on research in Ecuador, the indigenous rural population may remain impervious to the "merits of bilingual education", seeing Spanish as the language of economic advancement, ("they usually perceive bilingual education as an attempt to keep them predominantly Quechua speakers and deny them access to the wealth and status of their urban counterparts" - ibid: 104), while attitudes towards Quechua (the principal ethnic Indian language) become much more positive among the well-off urban population in Otavalo, where it is recognised to be under threat:



2.5.16.1 "Many adolescents understand Quechua, but prefer to speak Spanish, claiming that the former language causes their '...tongues to get twisted....' Many preadolescents are now Spanish-speaking monolinguals.... Among the urban inhabitants, the parents do not want their children to lose the ability to speak Quichua since it is now becoming an important element in their ethnic identity.... For many of these people, bilingual education is seen as a way to prevent the loss of the indigenous language" (Carpenter, op cit: 103 - 104).

2.5.17 There would seem to be obvious parallels here with the situation of Gaelic, given the historic economic neglect of the present-day heartland area - cf, from Gaelic speakers: "It is, you know, a few people having maybe more of an influence on the education system here than they're entitled to" and "It isn't necessary even if they did stay here in this environment to be able to speak Gaelic" ("Scottish Child": op cit); and, from a Quichua speaker: "almost nothing is written in Quechua so why on earth would anyone want to learn to read and write that language? Anything to be read is in Spanish, and anything worth writing about will also be in that language" (Carpenter, op cit: 104). Languages do not exist in a vacuum. The indigenous Gaelic-speaking population of 19th century Scotland was decimated by a process which one Gaelic speaker has described as "one of the most astounding of all the successes of landlord capitalism in Western Europe" (MacLean, 1939: 294). It may, therefore, seem historically inevitable that a significant proportion of Gaelic speakers saw the English language as a major socio-economic shibboleth, and remained as unmoved by arguments for bilingual education - put forward by urban-based activists - as would have been the surviving Ephraimites after their ethnic accents had

identified their brothers to the slaughtering Gileadites (Judges 12: 4 - 6). Fishman reinforces the sense of inevitability:

2.5.17.1 "countries which were, or are, imperialist...have produced the languages through which most future technical, political and social change will reach indigenous language communities, and the most likely languages through which locals can leave the indigenous language community" (Fishman, 1983: 40)

2.5.18 Conversely in today's world it may seem less surprising that interest in Gaelic-medium education has arisen most strikingly in those areas (both urban and rural - e.g. Skye, Islay, Tiree) where cultural identity might seem to be most in need of reinforcement. The attitude study conducted as part of the present thesis (4.1.ff) shows Gaelic-speakers to feel very positively towards Gaelic in education, which may reflect growing recognition that the language is under immediate threat within other domains, even in its own heartland, and/or response to supportive official policies. Sustained official support is, after all, a recent phenomenon:

2.5.18.1 "the expectation has been, from the time of the new *Statistical Account* onward, that those who learned English would give up Gaelic, or that their children would. The operative model has always been replacive rather than additive bilingualism...this is true not just for Sutherland, but for Scotland in general" (Dorian, 1981: 94).

2.5.19 Mackey (1972: 150) suggests that measures to establish bilingual education may sometimes be politically motivated, instead of arising from a situation of demonstrable local or regional linguistic need: thus, he continues, politically ascribed linguistic "needs" may not accurately reflect the linguistic desires of the target group:

2.5.19.1 "Language minorities have often been the victims of emotional exploitation from within by the few who can use it as a level to personal political power" (ibid).

2.5.20 Mackey gives no examples to indicate which minorities - or types of minority situation - he is referring to, or, indeed, how he defines "linguistic need", "linguistic desire" and "emotional exploitation". However the situation of the Finns in Sweden may again produce one possible example: Löfgren and Ouvinen-Birgerstam's longitudinal research project into a Finnish-Swedish bilingual teaching programme produced the following conclusions:

2.5.20 "The positive result obtained by the project's bilingual teaching model has led us to support the researchers who advocate teaching in the mother tongue in pre-school and compulsory school. However we wish to dissociate ourselves from those arguments, for teaching in the mother tongue, which attempt to frighten parents into choosing mother tongue-teaching, by 'threatening emotional and intellectual under-development in those children who do not receive mother tongue-teaching' (Löfgren and Ouvinen-Birgerstam, 1980: 103) (emphasis added).

2.5.21 It would seem important to define "Gaelic bilingual education" along equally clear-cut lines, to point out that historical awareness of the factors (political, sociological, economic, educational and psychological) which have contributed to language shift in Scotland over the past five hundred years is vital for understanding some of the present-day manifestations of that process (especially popular attitudes) but that what is happening in today's classrooms has evolved, at the expressed desire of parents, out of an entirely voluntary, parent-organised pre-school movement: there is no confrontational "emotional exploitation" of a political nature, or objectives more sinister or less honestly represented than those expressed in the Finnish-Swedish report (op cit):

2.5.21.1 "Teaching in the mother tongue does not seem to have the magical effect on the children's development, for good or ill, which it has sometimes been ascribed. Rather, we consider mother tongue teaching to be a human right. A child should not need to be cut off from his cultural inheritance, nor feel estranged from his cultural group or family. Furthermore, bilingual teaching doesn't seem to have a negative effect on other skills. Therefore, why should children be monolingual when they obviously are capable of being bilingual?" (Löfgren and Ouvinen-Birgerstam, op cit).

2.5.22 Paulston (1982: 36) suggests that "language maintenance is almost invariably due to social factors rather than love of the language", citing religion, social class and physical isolation as some of the potential contributory factors. There can be little doubt that physical isolation has

played a large part in the maintenance of Gaelic in the Western Isles. In the long term, however, Paulston holds out little hope for the efficacy of maintenance programmes (e.g. bilingual education) in face of language shift, though she seems to have buried Gaelic a little prematurely:

2.5.22.1 "Linguists, who of course love languages, tend to be ardent supporters of language maintenance and, I am afraid, frequently succumb to wishful thinking so that language shift, language attrition and language death are poorly understood phenomena (Gal, 1979, Dorian, 1981, Lambert and Freed, 1982). However, the normal situation with groups in prolonged contact within one nation is for the subordinate group to shift to the language of the dominant group, either over several hundred years as with Gaelic in Great Britain or over the span of three generations as has been the case with the European immigrants to the United States in an extraordinary rapid shift" (Paulston, *op cit* 36).

2.5.23 O Murchú (1970) suggests that for a language to remain stable within a bilingual situation it must be established within more than one - preferably several - domains: "as long as members of the community cannot feel that one code is appropriate to some situations it cannot, as long as the existing social and value systems persist, replace the code conventionally used in these situations" (O Murchú, 1970: 19). Attempts to establish Gaelic in the educational domain - with no educational ill-effect and possibly considerable enrichment to the children concerned - would seem

a creative response to language shift rather than "wishful thinking" in face of inevitability.

2.5.24 **Bilingualism** Definitions of bilingualism (and they are legion) are less relevant to this study than definitions of "bilingual education"; Haugen's the ability to "produce complete and meaningful utterances in the other language" (Haugen, 1956: 6) will serve the purpose, and is used implicitly throughout the study - for instance in discussion of minimal linguistic goals for individual children attending Gaelic Units (3.2ff, below) - with two passing caveats:

2.5.24.1 situations in which children use L2 fluently may vary - e.g. the child may be more practised in "classroom" Gaelic, less fluent in out-of-school social communication (McLaughlin, op cit: 7) - a factor which teachers may address in various ways (rôle-play, drama, school visits, etc)

2.5.24.2 "*communicative competence*" (Hymes, 1964) implies more than "complete and meaningful utterances" in the Chomskian sense: appropriate *codes*, styles and levels of communication (formal/polite, colloquial, slang, vulgar etc, McLaughlin op cit: 37) attach to different situations and can be as important as grammatical structure in terms of meaningful language control

2.5.25 **Bilingualism and academic attainment** Early theories as to the negative cognitive effects of bilingualism on academic attainment have been largely discredited, owing to their use of culture-loaded verbal testing

mechanisms and/or their failure to take proper account of mitigating socioeconomic disparities between control and experimental groups e.g. Saer (1923), Serota (1925). According to these studies, "thinking in one language and speaking in another" caused mental confusion and fatigue, and handicapped children in intelligence tests, especially verbal tests (McLaughlin, op cit: 169).

2.5.26 Saer, for example, compared predominantly rural Welsh-speaking children with predominantly urban monolinguals, and "discovered" that the latter showed progressively more aptitude than the former at each stage of the school - concluding that "mental confusion" (i.e. language interference) must be to blame, thus echoing the words of another Welshman:

2.5.26.1 "If it were possible for a child to live in two languages at once equally well, so much the worse. His intellectual and spiritual growth would not thereby be doubled, but halved. Unity of mind and character would have great difficulty in asserting itself in such circumstances" (Laurie, quoted Baker, 1988: 1).

2.5.27 The validity of Saer's experiment has been denied on grounds that the "class" (socioeconomic) variable was not properly controlled (Harris, 1976: 254). Serota (op cit) produced similarly ill-controlled evidence of "language handicap" among a group of Italian-American children (ibid). A survey on the Public Educational System of Puerto Rico (1926) tested 69,000 children, using American norms as the criteria (Harris, op cit: 255). Macnamara (1966: 13) points out that wherever verbal tests were used in translation in such studies no attempt was made to test whether the

translation process had altered the difficulty (e.g. Jones and Stewart, 1951).

2.5.28 Arsenian (1937) reviewed 32 studies conducted in the United States, and discovered that 60% reported evidence of intellectual handicap; 30% thought there may be a slight handicap; 10% found no evidence of handicap (McLaughlin, op cit: 169). Arsenian conducted his own research, among Italian and Jewish bilinguals (Arsenian, op cit) - with quite different results (Harris, op cit), but he in his turn has been criticised for his use of non-standardised, non-verbal intelligence tests (McLaughlin, op cit: 170). Subsequent testing has taken into account factors such as the relative "test sophistication" of groups (Macnamara, op cit - suggested as explanation of low Irish IQ compared to British controls; Smith and Lawley, 1948 - similar conclusions regarding disparity between scores found in comparing Hebridean and mainland children - "pace of life" was also suggested as a possible variable).

2.5.29 Consensus grew that environmental factors are more likely - or at least as likely - to affect scores as bilingualism:

2.5.29.1 "What studies.....seemed to suggest was not only that verbal intelligence measurements were intrinsically unfair to bilinguals but also that some sort of performance test was a more satisfactory means for evaluating preschool youngsters. In either case more controlled experiments were needed before....recommending a bilingual programme" (Harris, op cit: 258 - 9)



2.5.30 The turning point seems to have been Peal and Lambert's extensive critique of former methodologies (1962) and publication of their own study of French-English bilingual Canadian children, which controlled for variables such as socioeconomic class and extent of competence in L2. Here, for the first time, the bilingual subjects performed better than their monolingual peers in both verbal and non-verbal tests. However, though subsequent studies have appeared to corroborate these findings, Peal and Lambert's study is itself suspect: in order to equalise L2 ability they chose groups whose English (L2) was on a par with their French (L1): thus they could be expected to be generally more able pupils anyway:

2.5.30.1 "their research does not enable them to determine (i) whether the bilingual children became bilingual because they possessed a greater facility for language learning than monoglots; or (ii) whether the learning of the two languages tended to increase the bilinguals' competence in the attainments and skills in which they were tested" (Macnamara, op cit: 21).

2.5.31 However, since 1962, studies have, on the whole, tended to support (a) the *developmental interdependence hypothesis* (Cummins, 1979) rather than (b) the *balance hypothesis* (Macnamara, 1966). (b) supposes that human beings have a finite capacity for language learning - that skill in one language will restrict potential skill in the other (cf Baker's colourful "balloon" analogy, 1988, op cit: 2); (a) supposes that if L1 is stimulated to high development by the non-school environment, L2 will gain the potential for similar high levels of development, usually within the school

(Appel and Muysken, 1988: 104 - 105). Cummins' hypotheses (1979 and 1980) are based on (a) Lambert's distinction between additive and subtractive bilingualism (ibid: 105), the former the cornerstone of highly-successful Canadian French "immersion" teaching (Lambert and Tucker, 1972), the latter typified by low-achieving minority children in majority-language programmes; and (b) Skutnabb-Kangas and Toukomaa's distinction (1976) between "surface linguistic fluency" and "conceptual-linguistic knowledge", translated by Cummins into *Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills* (BICS) and *Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency* (CALP) respectively (Appel and Muysken, op cit: 105). The first is the basic linguistic skill required for everyday social or interpersonal language functions; the second necessary for the development of academic skills: it is in this area that, it is suggested, L1 needs most attention in order to provide a basis for L2 acquisition:

2.5.31.1 "Drawing on Cummins's views we can give the following answers to the main question asked in this section. Bilingualism does not have detrimental effects on language skills, provided that first-language proficiency is adequately supported. Children from ethnic minority groups should receive instruction in their mother tongue in order to develop adequate cognitive language skills, before full weight is given to second-language acquisition in school...Children from majority groups, speaking a prestige language, will also profit from bilingualism if the second language is introduced at an early stage, because the first language, including the aspects relevant for the acquisition of literacy, is already developed outside school" (Appel and Muysken, op cit: 107).

2.5.32 This is a most significant hypothesis in terms of Gaelic primary education. If true, it indicates that (a) native Gaelic speakers in the Gàidhealtachd may indeed be disadvantaged by being deprived of mother-tongue teaching in infant classes; and that (b) L2 learners in Gaelic "immersion" classes will benefit, rather than the reverse, from stimulation of English in the home - a matter which concerns most anglophone parents, who worry about their inability to reinforce the children's Gaelic after school. On the other hand, it would seem to raise some slight concern as regards children whose home L1 experience is underdeveloped. Cummins (1979) has formulated the *threshold hypothesis* which claims that bilingual children must reach a certain degree of fluency in *both* their languages in order to avoid detrimental effects on cognitive development: this, again, if true, would confirm the common-sense view that it may be counter-productive to end full "immersion" in L2 before the child has reached levels of competence sufficient to benefit from "bilingual" teaching.

2.5.33 There have recently been attempts to establish the relationship between bilingualism and (a) non-verbal cognitive development (e.g. Hakuta and Diaz - 1985) and (b) metalinguistic ability (e.g. Ianco-Worrell - 1972; Ben Zeev, 1977). There are indications of positive affect in both areas - especially, perhaps, in what Leopold (1939 - 49, op cit) called "detachment from words" - lack of nominalism (Appel and Muysken, op cit: 110): bilinguals may tend to be more flexible, less word-dependent, in their approach to meaning. It has also been suggested that they may tend to be more creative, or "divergent" in their thought processes (Baker, op cit: 3).

2.5.34 Bilingual education programmes McLaughlin (op cit: 156ff) gives a valuable resumé of some of the most important "language maintenance" or "additive" bilingual educational developments, from which the following is a selection of aspects which appear most directly relevant to current Gaelic primary initiatives:

2.5.34.1 *Redwood City Project*: Mexican-American and Anglo students, in a ratio of 2:1 in each class. Teachers mixed languages - sentence by sentence or idea by idea translation. Anglos learned very little Spanish "because they knew they could shift into English when they wanted to", were reluctant to speak Spanish for fear of teasing from Mexican children. The two groups stuck together - did not mix. Attitudes of Mexicans towards Spanish and Mexican culture were favourably affected, but not vice versa; English acquisition by Mexicans was no different from an all-English environment, Spanish and mathematics skills unaffected.

2.5.34.2 *Culver City Project*: Mexican-American and Anglo students, 1:4 per class. Total immersion - worked well: the children knew Spanish was the medium of instruction from the start, accepted the Mexicans as "models" of Spanish. Anglo students had had a year's separate immersion, so already knew some Spanish. Initially intended to delay English reading until Spanish reading base established, but because of a number of factors, including parental concern, English reading begun half-way through the first year: resulted in considerable interference with Spanish reading and speaking - parents

persuaded to defer until the second year. Anglo group very positive towards Spanish culture.

2.5.34.3 *John F Kennedy School, Berlin*: American and German students, 50:50 per class. Teachers used both languages (English and German) line by line or different languages with different children or switched to help comprehension; felt this slowed down teaching, made it boring, caused discipline problems, cultural segregation. No pressure put on pupils to use either language - complete freedom of choice, so followed natural tendency to speak their own language: many American students spoke a mixed language (like Pennsylvanian Dutch). No positive benefits seemed to emerge - exposure to L2 had no effect, as children did not have to use it - no observable cultural benefits.

2.5.34.4 *St Lambert Project, Canada*: French immersion for English-speaking children. No English in P1. Tested at end of each year:

- (a) P1: English reading skills below control group; good English comprehension, but slower English verbal output.  
French: poorer on all indices.  
Arithmetic tests, *either language*, as good as control.
- (b) P2: English language skills: on a par with control (now had two 35-minute English language arts periods per day)  
French: still behind control, especially grammar; noticeable progress in pronunciation  
Arithmetic (either language): better than control (this was thought due to more thorough acquisition of concepts through L2

instruction

- (c) P3 and 4: narrowing gap in French language skills. More simple, though correct, language than French counterparts, understood and read without difficulty
- (d) P5 - 7: still behind French-speaking control in French language perhaps due to lack of exposure outside school, but high level of competence - far above subject-taught primary children.

This has become the model for total immersion programmes throughout Canada. Results from other programmes are amazingly consistent: initial retardation in L1 until formal instruction begun; L2 much nearer native speaker standard than children learning 20 - 40 minutes French per day.

2.5.34.5 *The Elgin project, Canada:* partial immersion - half-day French (maths, music, French language arts) half-day English (English language arts, P.E., art, environmental studies etc) English reading introduced in P1, French in P2. By the end of P3, English language skills below peers in monolingual English class; French comprehension behind that of total immersion pupils.

2.5.35 The paradoxical findings,- that children seem to prosper in a total L2 immersion class, while ethnic minority pupils in the US flounder,- can only be explained in terms of social and psychological differences (McLaughlin, op cit: 163). Children in Canadian schools do not feel inferior, their language is respected. They do not have to compete with native French speakers in the same class: in total immersion programmes,

native speakers are kept together in a separate group for the whole of the first year. The programme is optional, and so parental support and commitment is high. On the other hand, it was noted that the attitudes of the children towards the minority culture were not as positive as had been expected:

2.5.35.1 "If success is achieved in second-language training but the child remains negative towards the other culture, one of the major aims of bilingual education has not been realised" (ibid).

2.5.36 On the other hand, the latter studies date from a time when language activism was at its height in Canada, and political movements of this kind tend to throw up a negative backlash - as indicated by Paulston's comments on the Finnish-Swedish debate (1982, op cit) and as noted in reports on Welsh education (Appendix 3, below). Once accepted one would expect such programmes to make a positive contribution to inter-community relationships.

2.5.37 Implications for Gaelic primary education programmes The above findings, taken in tandem with experience in Wales (cf Appendix 3, below), Northern Ireland (cf Appendix 4, below) Spain, Sweden etc suggests that there may be reason for optimism about the outcome of present Gaelic primary school programmes, especially those in which second language immersion is continued until the pupils' competence is sufficient to enable them to learn through the medium of either language - a point which is more fully explored in discussion of individual Gaelic Units in Scotland (section 3.2, below). However it seems important to stress that what is

under discussion here is the linguistic experience of individual children - or relatively small groups of children. The status of Gaelic is affected by many exterior factors (political, economic, sociological) and despite the importance of the educational domain the school cannot be expected to right all of these: in turn the efficacy of educational programmes is affected to some extent by the status of the language of instruction in the wider community outwith the school. Thus the recognition of Gaelic by the mass media, officialdom, the Churches etc will continue to be a matter of concern for language promotion agencies, and the concerned educationist may in turn play an important rôle in pressing for improvements in these areas as vital to the success of the programme he/she is promulgating within the classroom and to the social and educational well-being of the pupils concerned. Hymes' reminder of the realities of language deficit among many ordinary, first-language programme pupils seems worth quoting:

2.5.37.1 "The limitations...appear when the image of the unfolding, mastering fluent child is set beside the real children in our schools. The theory must seem, if not irrelevant, then at best a doctrine of poignancy: poignant because of the difference between what one imagines and what one sees....To cope with the realities of children as communicating beings requires a theory within which socio-cultural factors have an explicit and constitutive rôle" (Hymes, 1972: 269).

2.5.38 Bernstein's sociolinguistic theory in this area (1965) revolves around his hypothesis of *restricted* and *elaborated* codes. Gumperz (1972:



218 - 219) usefully summarises Bernstein's hypothesis, in which *closed* family rôle systems are contrasted with *open* systems: the former emphasising communal values at the expense of freedom of individual expression, the latter emphasising individual freedom and adaptability; the former limiting the verbal introduction of new information and ideas, stressing social propriety and leading to relatively ritualised exchanges - so-called restricted linguistic codes which are designed to reinforce pre-existing social relationships - the latter tending to generate so-called elaborated codes "capable of expressing information about the physical and social environment and emphasizing the ability to use speech creatively, for the transmission of such information" (Gumperz, op cit: 218). The early socialisation process of individual children predominantly within one or other of these systems affects their subsequent attitudes towards speech:

2.5.38.1 "These attitudes create conflicts when children are faced with the kind of learning tasks usually required in school. Bernstein suggests that it is the schools' inability to bridge the communication gap with restricted code speakers which accounts for the fact that so many children are slow to learn verbal skills. He rejects the notion of cultural or linguistic deprivation: the problem is one of differing socialization methods, and the difficulty lies in devising a strategy for communicating with children unaccustomed to the types of social relationships required in school" (ibid: 219).

2.5.39 Failure fully to grasp the complexities of Bernstein's thesis has led to subsequent misconstruction, as is pointed out by Gumperz (op cit: 218) and Rosen (Rosen and Rosen, 1973: 246 - 7):

2.5.39.1 "many have claimed that he has 'proved' or 'shown' that the language of working-class children is essentially inferior and therefore that the children are bound to do less well at school".

2.5.40 Both the sociolinguistic research which has called into question this erroneous interpretation of Bernstein's work (e.g. Labov, 1970), and Bernstein's own restatement and modification of his thesis (e.g. Bernstein, 1971), are beyond the remit of this study. For present purposes it may be argued that even the misinterpretation - damaging though it may in terms of long-term perceptions of social classification, seductive though it undoubtedly has been to some practitioners as an excuse to "blame the victim" and exonerate the school (Rosen and Rosen, op cit: 247) - has had some salutary effects in terms of general teaching practice. The Plowden and Bullock Reports (1966 and 1975 respectively) were instrumental in heightening practitioners' awareness of the educational value of encouraging children's talk and other forms of "free expression". So-called "interventionist" or "compensatory" educational programmes designed to help allay the language "deficit" of the stereotyped "Bernstein child" have generally attempted to find ways of defining what "the ideal teacher" does - "fostering the teachers' encouragement of children's talking - in comment on ongoing activity and in question and explanation" (Francis, in Davies, 1982: 23). Of course this is hard to

define, let alone put into practice: Francis suggests that the teachers involved in, for example, Gahagan and Gahagan's study (1982) found most helpful the practical suggestions - verbal games, physical ways of concentrating attention on one sense or another, ideas for drama etc:

2.5.40.1 "What was actually done in the project was to structure the use of these activities according to specific language aims to do with improving auditory discrimination, attention, span of attention and varied comprehension and production skills" (ibid: 23)

2.5.41 Throughout her discussion of recent teaching research Francis warns against the difficulty of evaluating the success of so-called compensatory language techniques: "The projects developed different interventions and different approaches to evaluation, but all suffered the difficulty of describing educational and social action in terms of measured outcomes" (ibid: 25). Nevertheless it is clear that the teachers involved in the various projects experienced a heightened awareness of opportunities for linguistic development in the classroom context, and that if nothing was conclusively proven as regards the optimum (or any) means of defining, let alone ameliorating the "deficit", this could often be ascribed to the all-round improvement of all the children's performance (test and control groups) as a result of curricular development. Francis's conclusions would seem to have immediate relevance to the type of education being developed in Gaelic voluntary play-groups and official nursery and primary units:

2.5.41.1 "The burden of the language intervention programmes has been that increased attention to language is not in itself very productive, but that 'good nursery practice' which entails the sharing of new experiences by teacher and child within 'cognitively' and 'socially' orientated schooling facilitates both language and more general learning. The two march hand in hand. In devoting attention to the functions of language we need not only to spell out the criteria by which we infer intentions and meanings but also to discriminate those features of dialogue that promote learning" (ibid: 35 - 36).

2.5.42 Thus the heightened language-sensitivity of teaching-staff involved in Gaelic-medium education programmes may perhaps be inferred to explicate, at least in part, the apparent social and educational advantages which secondary staff perceive among children, of disparate social backgrounds, transferring from Sir John Maxwell Gaelic Unit to Hillpark Secondary School (as discussed in section 3, below). Certainly in Wales and Northern Ireland the examination results of Welsh- and Irish-medium educated children tend to be consistently higher across all subject areas (cf Appendices 3 and 4). Popular opinion on the development of Gaelic-medium education in Scotland often perceives existent bilingual programmes as disastrously overdue - possibly even so late as to be futile or cosmetic - given the decline in Gaelic as a spoken community language and the omnipresence of English. For example:

2.5.42.1 " 'they can't make the children speak Gaelic in the playground unless the children speak Gaelic in the home and that's

*something that's not happening because the medium is English there, apart from a very, very few exceptions. They watch television in English, they play the games they see on television in English"* and

2.5.42.2 *"'They spend thousands and thousands of pounds on this rubbish and they're never going to keep Gaelic alive by teaching it in schools like that. If parents don't speak to the children in the home, it's a waste of time, an absolute waste of time and money"*

(The Scottish Child, Vol 1, Issue 2: 1987)

2.5.43 Contrary to the opinions expressed above (2.5.42.1 and 2), in today's society the rôle of the school is generally perceived to be of great importance in the linguistic development of the child, as is acknowledged by the majority of respondents in the attitude study conducted as part of the present thesis (Section 4, below). In fact it could be argued that the time has never been riper for the development of Gaelic-medium education within a frame-work in which the educational needs of children do not become subsumed within or obscured by wider political movements, and increased language awareness on the part of the practitioner (albeit through *second* language medium teaching) turned to the general educational advantage of the pupils concerned. As will be seen in Appendix 3 (below) bilingual education in Wales has the advantage of having been established when the pool of native speaking children was larger, but the disadvantage of having had to disengage itself from a legacy of outmoded formal pedagogy not only as regards

language teaching *per se* but also as regards general teaching practice (1).

(1) *Footnote*

*This anomaly was observed recently - April, 1989 - when an education officer from Wales visited a Gaelic Unit to talk with staff and, hopefully, give them the benefit of expertise learned over a considerable period of service in a designated bilingual Region. Here Welsh is taken for granted - and fully supported - as the principal medium of education in all primary schools; therefore the priority has of late been to improve general practice - and so all-round linguistic competence - through encouraging an integrated curricular approach, greater variety of organisational and managerial strategies, more emphasis on concept formation, creative communication and the expressive arts, exploration of the surrounding environment and so on (cf Appendix 3, below).*

*In the Scottish Gaelic Unit, however, staff feel themselves to be thoroughly cognisant of and experienced in use of such methods through the medium of English, and their preoccupations are not "what or how should we teach" but "how can we teach through the medium of Gaelic, with the current shortage of resources, ancillary and advisory staff, nursery provision etc, without compromising 'our own accepted teaching standards and practices". Consequently the encounter was attended by a certain sense of mutual frustration on the part both of the teachers and their Welsh visitor - "he didn't really tell us anything we didn't know*

*already*" and *"they didn't seem very receptive to what we are doing in Wales"*. With acknowledgement of the two different starting points there is no doubt their conversation could have been beneficial: the Welshman could certainly have used his knowledge of the historical development of bilingual education in Wales in helping the staff to sort their problems into areas which they could address within the present *status quo* and those which require extra resourcing or reorganisation if the system is to be effective in the future.

### 3. GAELIC PRIMARY EDUCATION IN THE 1980's

*"The change that has come over the status of Gaelic in less than four years is one of the most dramatic revolutions of all. As if to emphasise the point the Postman delivered, just as I sat down to write, an elaborate questionnaire about popular attitudes to Gaelic education. The most remarkable thing about the questionnaire - although it should be the most natural - is that it is written in Gaelic!*

*"It is significant to say too that it came not from a Gaelic pressure group but from the Department of Education in a Scottish University" (James Shaw Grant, 1987: 3)*



### 3.1 GENERAL BACKGROUND

3.1.1 The most up-to-date account of Gaelic development is "*Adhartas na Gàidhlig*" ("*Gaelic Progress Report*") - commissioned by Comunn na Gàidhlig (cf 3.1.3, below), MacDonald (CHAG) 1989. This Report, therefore, will be used as a framework for what follows, to be amplified and qualified where appropriate. MacKinnon, 1987, provides another accessible and succinct overview of recent developments.

3.1.2 MacDonald refers in his introduction to an earlier report: "*Cor na Gàidhlig*" ("*The situation of Gaelic*"), produced (1982) by a special Report Group set up by the Highlands and Islands Development Board in order to investigate the current position of the language and recommend appropriate courses of action (also written by MacDonald: HIDB, 1983). Possibly most noteworthy about this initiative was the recognition, by a primarily economic Government development agency, of the vital complementary rôle played by cultural and linguistic growth in the well-being of the community. Section 1.2 of the present thesis has already referred to the valuable part played by the Napier Commission (1884) in pressing the educational needs of Gaelic-speaking children as part of its wider remit to investigate the economic needs of the Gàidhealtachd and, conversely, to the singular failure of many subsequent cultural and educational initiatives to take account of the vital economic factors at play. Since 1983, in addition to channeling funds into a number of the initiatives its Report had recommended, the HIDB has also employed its own Gaelic development officer (1984: MacKinnon, op cit: 13) who was instrumental - among many other things - in establishing (a) a scheme called "Airighean

*Samhraidh* ("Summer Shiellings"), whereby young Gaelic learners from non-Gaelic speaking homes were enabled to live *en famille* within a Gaelic-speaking community during the summer holidays, and (b) an adult Gaelic literacy class. HIBD officers have also undertaken study visits to observe the ways in which other bilingual communities tackle the twin challenges of economic and cultural development with special reference to youth educational and leisure initiatives (e.g. MacIver, 1989; Pedersen, HIBD, 1989: cf Appendix 3). At time of writing, the HIBD celebrates its 25th anniversary (HIBD: 1989 - in preparation) while its own long-term future is under investigation as part of the present Government's increasing devolvement of local and regional control to the private sector - as is the broadcasting network throughout Britain. It seems unfortunate that such radical realignment of influence is mooted at a time when Gaelic interests have increasingly been acknowledged as essential public services in both fields: time will tell whether new, profit-based agencies will be similarly punctilious in attempting to serve the cultural needs of the indigenous community.

3.1.3 As a result of the recommendations of "*Cor na Gàidhlig*" (op cit) a new Gaelic development agency, *Comunn Na Gàidhlig* (CNAG: *The Gaelic Association*) was set up, funded initially by HIBD. With a Director and small secretariat operating from an office in Inverness, the composition of its Board of Directors indicates its potential for rational coordinated development across both the official and voluntary sectors: it includes representation from Regional Councils (Comhairle nan Eilean, Highland and Strathclyde) and the HIBD; professional agencies such as Acair Earranta (Gaelic Publishing Company) and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (Gaelic F.E. College);

voluntary organisations such as the Gaelic Play-group Association, An Comann Gàidhealach (the national Gaelic cultural promotional agency) and Comunn Luchd-Ionnsachaidh (CLI - the Gaelic Language Learners' network); and from key members of the grassroots community representing active professional involvement in some aspect of Gaelic culture and life, including the Churches. Subsequently a Gaelic Education Officer post was established, funded by the Scottish Education Department, working in close liaison with Local Authorities, the Scottish Office, teacher training colleges etc. and, in 1988, a Community Development Officer, working with a small field-team, in cooperation with Community Education, the Social Services, etc, with special responsibility for youth leisure development. CNAG's functions are defined by MacDonald (CNAG, 1989, op cit: 2) in terms of its proven track-record in the following areas:

3.1.3.1 co-operation with existing agencies, co-ordination of effort and resources

3.1.3.2 generation of new ideas and initiatives, both "at its own hand" and in cooperation with other agencies

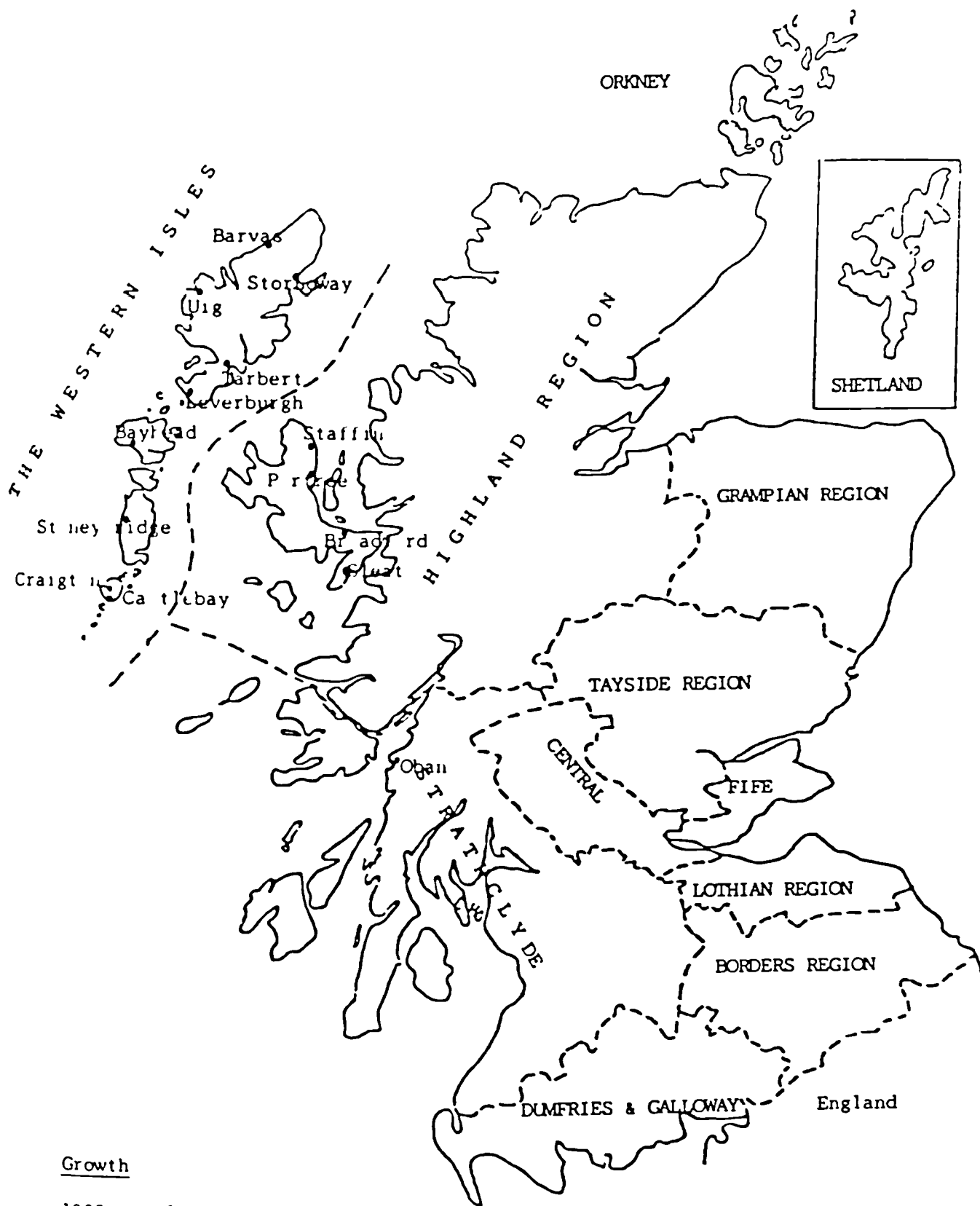
3.1.3.3 advisory service to the Scottish Office and support services to local authorities

3.1.3.4 local project-based activities and community field-work

3.1.4 Into the latter category falls the development of a network of Gaelic youth-clubs ("Sradagan" or "Sparks" for fluent Gaelic-speaking

# SRADAGAN CLUBS IN SCOTLAND

MAP 1



## Growth

1982	0
1988	14

primary-school aged children, "*Cearcall*" or "*Circle*" for teenagers). These are loosely modelled on the Welsh Urdd, having the same aims - to provide an enjoyable out-of-school experience through the medium of Gaelic. *Sradagan* clubs are run by local parents, and typical activities include arts and crafts, drama, music, sport etc. *Cearcall* operates rather on a specific project basis, utilising the expertise and support of members of the community with special skills - these may be as diverse as fishing or sailing, mountaineering or dressmaking. *Cearcall* is in process of full affiliation with the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, which will give added focus to club activities, as does attendance of specially-run Gaelic summer camps for both age-groups. Map 1 shows the situation of *Sradagan* clubs in 1988 - already somewhat out of date (November, 1989). An area of possible development is leisure activity catering specifically for the needs and interests of young Gaelic L2 learners.

3.1.5 Other youth activities (MacDonald, op cit: 7) include *Guth na h-Oige* ("The voice of Youth") - a radio-skills project initially established through collaboration between the BBC and the Scottish Arts Council, which feeds regular local-interest material into BBC's *Rèidio nan Gàidheal* and which has more recently been involved in producing cassette-recorded material for the new Standard-Grade Gaelic Learners' course being devised within Jordanhill College of Education. The appointment, in 1987, of a National Gaelic Arts Development Officer, funded jointly by CNAG and the Scottish Arts Council, has already had far-reaching effects, perhaps the most notable being development of dramatic skills among young people: a scheme for a National Gaelic Youth Theatre was brought a step closer by a drama school run in Lionacleit Community School during the summer holidays,

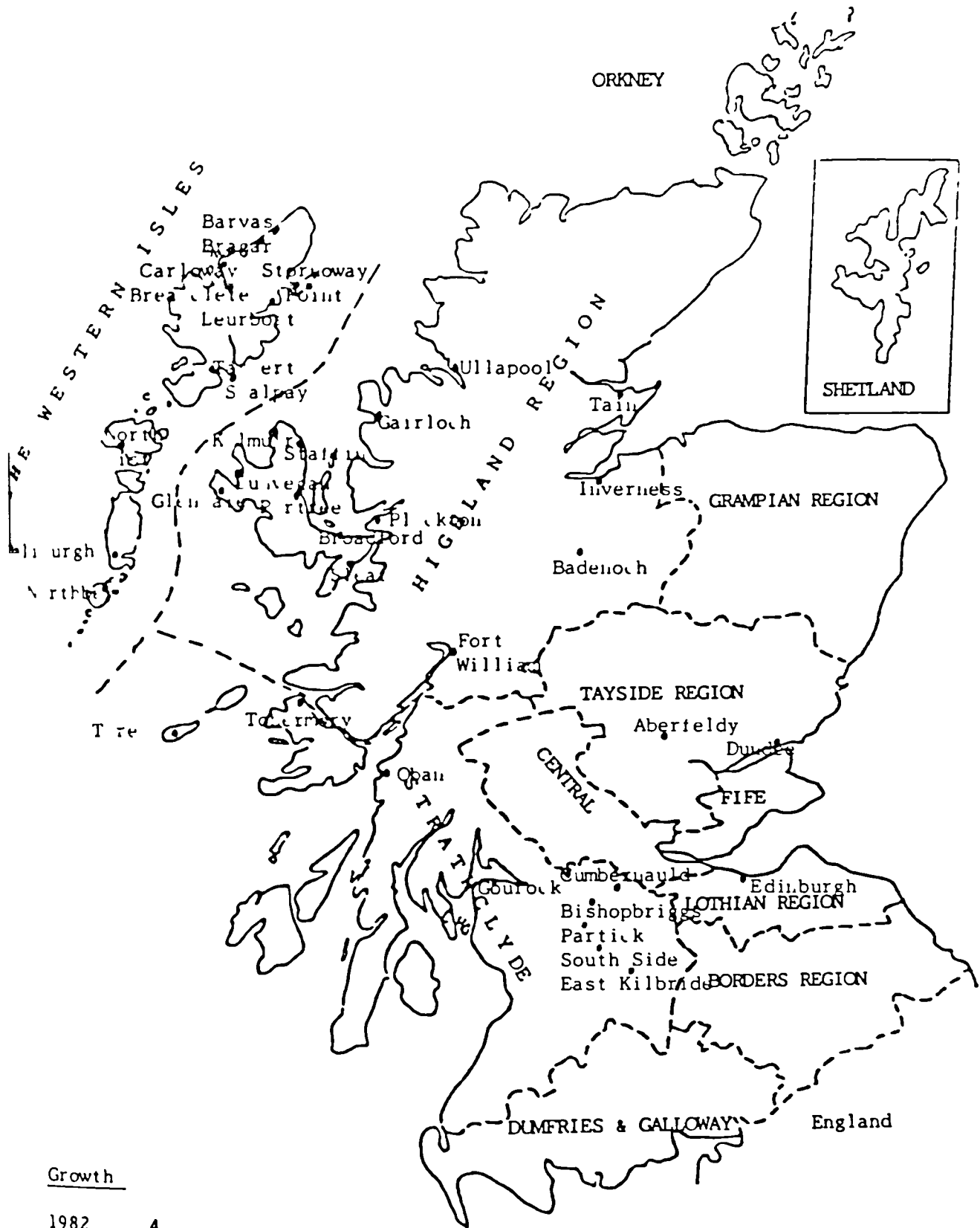
(July, 1988), and a temporary professional Gaelic Theatre for Schools project ("*Ordag is Sgealbag*") is currently running within Highland Region (Winter Term, 1989).

3.1.6 In all this, it may be argued, the lead shown by *Comhairle nan Sgoiltean Araich* (The Gaelic Play-group Association) has been seminal. Established in 1982 by the efforts of a small core of dedicated and determined people (cf Case Studies 1 and 3, Section 3.4, and Attitude Study, 4, below) this has grown from small-scale coordination of existent scattered voluntary effort into a national organisation. Map 2 shows the groups existent in 1988, again, out of date: CNSA's Annual Report (1988 - 89) shows 64 existent groups - 44 playgroups, 20 "parent-and-child" groups, involving 920 children (CNSA, 1989: 1-2). The Report gives indications of diverse activities - from parents' classes and training courses to broadcasting and publishing. An interesting development is the Iona District Gaelic Playgroup Association, established 1988, which "operates a Gaelic Language immersion programme for the pre-school children on the Iona Peninsula area of Cape Breton" (added emphasis) (Cròileagan a' Chaolais, n.d.) This group, with full membership of CNSA, has 16 enrolled children.

3.1.7 However, perhaps CNSA's most significant rôle has been as a catalyst of parental demand for the continuation of Gaelic-medium education into the primary school. This emerged originally in Glasgow and Inverness (cf Section 3.2, below) gaining added impetus<sup>1</sup> from a survey conducted by Glasgow University Department of Education into the feasibility of establishing Gaelic-medium primary schools outwith the Gàidhealtachd (Grannid, 1983 discussed in sections 3.2.2.3 and 4.12, below). In this the

# GAELIC PLAYGROUPS IN SCOTLAND

MAP 2



University was assisted financially by *Urras Brosnachaidh na Gàidhlig* (*The Gaelic Language Promotion Trust*) - another instance of the phenomenon remarked upon by MacDonald (CNAG, 1989, op cit: 2) in relation to youth development programmes:

3.1.7.1 "In common with CHSA, which predates CNAG, these initiatives share the common characteristic of having a specific and clearly defined remit, which has helped them to attract funding. Clearly further initiatives of this kind are possible, in response to identified needs".

3.1.8 But in subsequent years undoubtedly the most influential catalyst in this area has been the Government's Scheme for Specific Grants for Gaelic, initiated in 1985 (MacKinnon, op cit: 13; MacDonald, CNAG: op cit, 6) as a result of Government Ministerial attendance at a conference convened by CNAG in conjunction with Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (Report: CNAG, 1985). This scheme gives invaluable pump-priming for new educational initiatives: local authorities find 25% of costs, Government supplies 75%, on the understanding that all such initiatives, if permanent (e.g. teachers' salaries in Gaelic Primary Units) shall become absorbed into mainstream Regional budgets when up-and-running. Having increased from an initial £250,000 to over £850,000 nett (i.e. over £1,000,000 gross when regional contribution is taken into account) in the space of four years, the scheme constitutes a significant recognition of 'Gaelic education, not only by Central Government but also by COSLA (the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities - generally not predisposed to the system of specific grants, with their overtones of governmental determinism). It allows local



authorities to review the needs of Gaelic (e.g. parental demand for Gaelic-medium primary education) outwith the normal budgetary constraints and conflicting interests and has certainly accelerated the growth of Gaelic primary Units (3.2, below).

3.1.9 The administration of the Specific Grants scheme has in itself provided an unusual element of inter-authority cooperation which in many aspects approximates to national policy-making or language-planning. Thus a general philosophy has emerged from the need to establish realistic levels for each annual grant, in which Regional Education Committee members, the regional Directorates and Advisory Services, and Comunn na Gàidhlig find common ground and a forum for the representation of related concerns, from teacher training, resource development and national assessment to class-teacher ratios and linguistic usage in schools. The structure is as follows:

3.1.9.1 The Inter-authority Standing Group on Gaelic: convened by CNAG this is made up of officer-member representatives (at Chairman/Director level) of all Regional Authorities interested in participating in the scheme for Specific Grants - that is to say, interested in developing Gaelic initiatives within their respective Regions. Comhairle nan Eilean, Highland Regional Council and Strathclyde Regional Council are the chief protagonists, by dint of their greater utilisation of the Scheme; however Lothian Region has a primary Gaelic Unit and is planning a Nursery class for the 1989 - 90 session, Grampian Region has recently (1988) appointed a Gaelic pre-school development officer with a view to the establishment of a

Gaelic primary Unit in Aberdeen in 1990; Central, Tayside and Fife Regions have various schemes in train, including secondary Gaelic subject teaching and adult classes; the other Regions consistently express good-will while as yet having no plans for Gaelic development.

**3.1.9.2 The Management Review Group:** this is made up of the officials (Directors of Education) who administer decisions taken in principle at Inter-authority Standing Group meetings and in detail at subsequent local Education Committee meetings. This group in turn devolves responsibility for detailed planning in terms of inter-regional Gaelic resource development to

**3.1.9.3 (a) The Primary Review Group and (b) the Secondary Review Group** - made up of representatives from the Advisory Service, teacher training Colleges, Acair (Gaelic publishing company) and CNAG. From these groups emerge long-term and large-scale resources, funded from Specific Grant, such as, at the primary stage, a Maths scheme (currently in translation and First-phase piloting stage), commissioned Gaelic novels for older primary children, topic-packs, etc. The Primary Review Group has also recently been the scene of considerable debate over classroom linguistic usage - especially as regards the Gaelic counting system, as referred to again, (Section 4, below).

3.1.10 Gaelic-medium primary education Outwith the Gàidhealtachd, and even in most Gaelic primary Units in Skye, this constitutes language maintenance among the few children already bilingual at time of school entry, but predominantly L2 acquisition (additive bilingualism) for non-Gaelic speakers (cf section 3.3, below). The methods used are (a) initial language immersion (varying lengths of time, according to Regional or school policy - cf 3.2, below) followed by a course of bilingual primary education in which the normal primary curriculum is presented, with Gaelic as a medium of education - in some Units the principal medium. In these cases children remain within the Gaelic Unit for the entirety of their primary schooling.

3.1.11 Within the Outer Isles, on the other hand, where a much higher proportion of children come from Gaelic-speaking homes (cf Section 3.3, below) and where a Bilingual Policy already pertains in all primary schools, parental demand appears rather as a desire for a more overtly Gaelic-medium education than seems, in practice, on offer in at least some schools within the officially designated "bilingual" school area. In these Units the children are educated solely through Gaelic for the first two or three years, then rejoin their peers in (or progress together into, if 100% are in the so-called "Unit" e.g. Stoneybridge, S. Uist and Breascleit, Lewis) the normal "bilingual stream. Murray feels that it should not be necessary, and may even be counter-productive in the long-term, to designate some classes within a bilingual primary school "more Gaelic" than others:

3.1.11.1 "not because I doubt the sincerity or disagree with the aims of parents, but because I doubt whether those in 'authority' have thought sufficiently about the function and place of these Units in relation to 'mainstream' primary education. Where an education authority has a detailed bilingual education policy in operation, as in the Western Isles, one wonders why it should be necessary to add on segments to primary schools in an apparently haphazard way" (Murray, 1987:4)

3.1.12 In section 4, below, popular attitudes suggest that this may in fact spring from parental concern over the influence of anglophone "incomers" - who, it is felt, should not be placed in a position where Gaelic immersion becomes compulsory for their children - though it is felt it would be pleasant and suitable should such people voluntarily espouse the culture of their adopted home - though totally Gaelic-medium initial programmes are widely felt to be the only way of halting present levels of language erosion in the heartland. In the meantime the influence of monolingual children can have a disproportionate effect of linguistic balance in the so-called bilingual class: some parents therefore feel separate education to be the only answer until their children's linguistic usage is more thoroughly established. Comhairle nan Eilean are currently embarking on research into the way forward in this, and might find a "let-out" clause in, for example, Canadian research, where it has been clearly demonstrated that L2 learners operate much more successfully when segregated from native speakers, at least initially. But this presupposes that total immersion would also be taking place in the "non-native" class. They might also find encouragement in the experience of Gwynedd, Wales

(Appendix 3) where an across-the-board bilingual policy operates in which all children in all primary schools are initially immersed in Welsh and where the element of compulsion is tackled (rather than ducked) through improving practice (and therefore the pleasure and value of the children's experience).

**3.1.13 Teacher training and supply** This has been at least a niggling worry during the early developmental stages of Gaelic-medium education and has come to a head at the start of session 1989-90, with several planned Gaelic Units as yet unstaffed owing, it is suspected, to a combination of (a) genuine shortage of Gaelic-speaking teachers in Regions which have had no previous policy of enticing local Gaelic-speakers back to their place of origin and (b) lack of confidence of available personnel in their ability to teach through the medium of Gaelic. Appropriate training (tailored not only to the methodological needs of teachers, but also to their practical circumstances - especially in terms of re-training married women) seems a priority. Future projected figures are gloomy, according to a study document produced by the Northern College of Education (1989). Factors unconnected with Gaelic have militated against staff enrolment in recent years and such trends can have a disproportionate effect on already constricted areas such as Gaelic. Within the Gaelic world several conflicting interests compete to snap up new graduates - the media and the Gaelic College, for example - and both of these have a genuine urgent need for young blood also. On a brighter note, (a) one cause for teacher shortage is the rapid development of some established Units, the steadily increasing demand for new Units to be established and the beginnings of a promotion-structure for practitioners already in the Gaelic-medium field;

and (b) a well-subscribed Gaelic Learners' class has recently (September 1989) been established within Jordanhill College of Education by popular demand from primary students hoping eventually to teach in Highland Region - a clear indication that present policies are beginning to take effect and reinforcement of the impression that sooner rather than later the authorities must look into more effective ways of teaching Gaelic to L2 learners - in order to create more potential Gaelic-medium teachers, as in Wales.

3.1.14 Other national trends are giving cause for concern at present - such as the shortly-to-commence national assessment of all children at P4 and P7, which might militate against Gaelic-medium educated children at the earlier stage were tests to be administered through English: this is one area where the Regional Authorities have acted both individually and collectively to safeguard the interests of their Gaelic Unit children - and their own policies. It seems hopeful that appropriate mechanisms will be identified to take children's linguistic background into account, as has already been established in Wales. School Boards are another area of concern - how to ensure that the interests of small specialist Units are represented upon a Board elected by the majority - though in one school parental commitment (and numerical strength, compared to other much smaller Units) has recently secured for the Gaelic Unit three out of four places on the Board. The long-term implications of the School Boards, however, with their potential for "opting out" of local authority control, would seem to indicate an area where dangers lurk at the very time when other factors seem particularly favourable. Again, at secondary level the proposed

compulsory teaching of at least one "Modern *Foreign* Language" to all pupils during the years of compulsory secondary education threatens not only the status of Gaelic but its very survival within some schools, as fully discussed in Section 4, below (cf also Gillies, 1989b).

3.1.15 On the other hand, none of the preceding educational initiatives would have been conceivable before the concept of "freedom of parental choice in education" was made commonplace by the present Government. Parents are being encouraged to take an active interest in their children's education in several different ways and at several different levels, and that must be salutary for a language which, in the past, has suffered acutely from a sense of impotence in face of remote and high-handed forces. At present it seems (and this is confirmed by the Attitude Study conducted as part of the present thesis - section 4 below) that given the chance a gratifying proportion of parents, including many outwith the Gàidhealtachd, are exceedingly interested in the concept of bilingual education in general and Gaelic-medium education in particular.

### 3.2 GÀELIC PRIMARY UNITS IN SCOTLAND

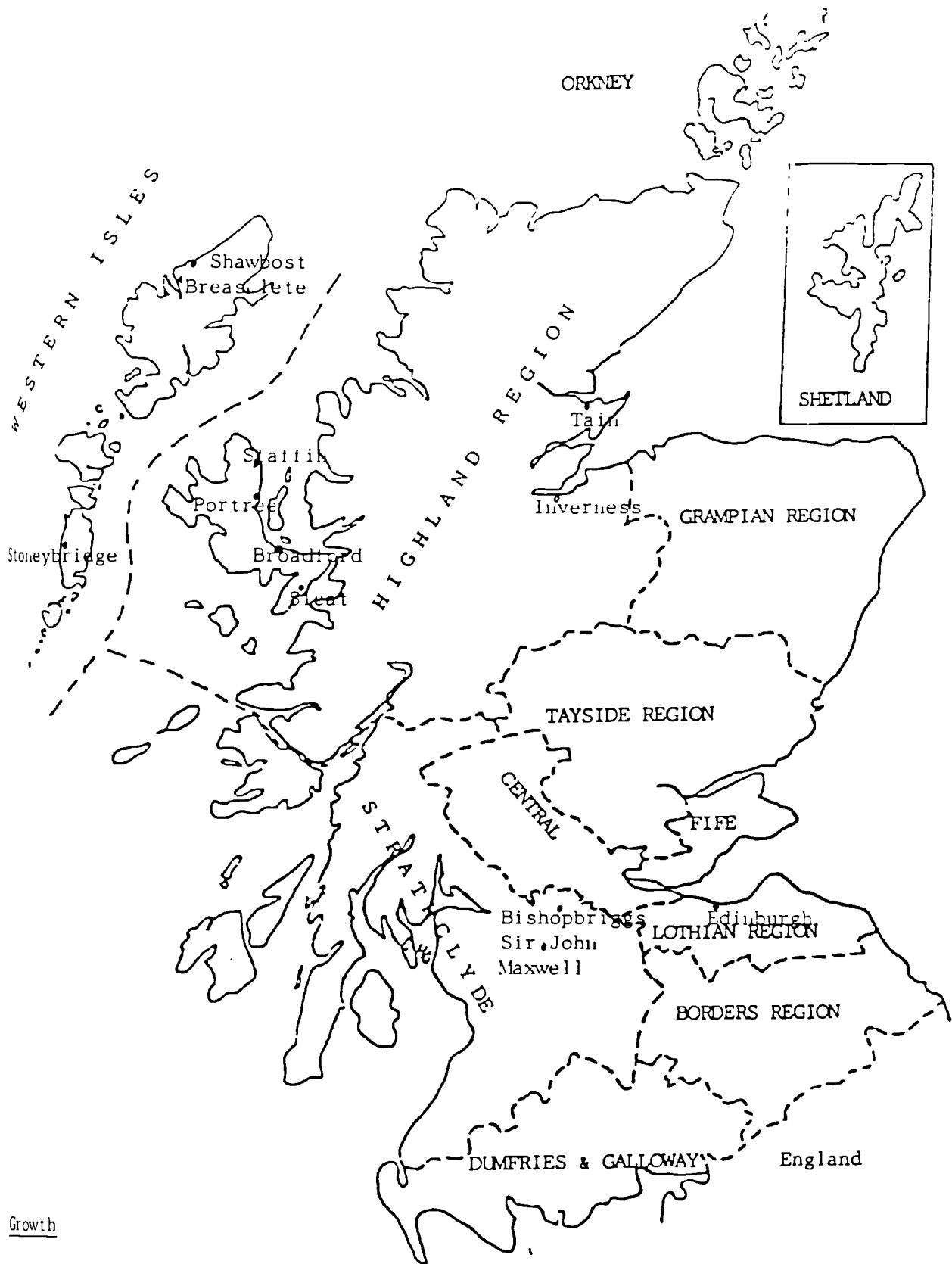
*"It is simply not so that we can only understand what we can measure, and I doubt that we will ever be able to reduce the most important issues in bilingual education to quantifiable terms"*

(Paulston, 1982: 12)



# GAELIC-MEDIUM UNITS IN SCOTLAND

MAP 3



Growth

1982	0
1988	12

## 3.2 GAEILIC PRIMARY UNITS IN SCOTLAND

### 3.2.1 Introduction

3.2.1.1 There is little external documentary evidence available either to confirm or to expand upon what follows. The research has been carried out primarily through interviewing parents, teachers, local residents, pupils etc, and through ongoing observation of essentially changing phenomena. Care, therefore, has been taken to confine the remit to expressive rather than evaluative representation of each school situation, to areas in which personal contact were felt to constitute an advantage rather than a drawback in research terms. The first two studies (3.2.2 and 3.2.3) have been written in some detail, representing urban schools, both of which were established on the same day, and therefore may yield useful insight into common and contrasting developmental features. The remainder of the studies follow Fishman's model: "Thumbnail sketches of ten bilingual schools..." (1976: 127ff).

3.2.1.2 There is a need for a more empirical approach in future, perhaps most usefully of the "interaction analysis" variety (Townsend, 1976: 189), in order objectively to quantify current practice, monitor instructional systems, investigate the relationships between (a) specific classroom activities and linguistic usage-patterns and (b) change - cognitive, behavioural (social and linguistic) - and so to inspire and inform (c) teaching stratagems and (d) appropriate teacher-training mechanisms.

3.2.1.3 The Gaelic Units, however, were in their infancy throughout the research period, as was the concept of Gaelic-medium primary education as a means towards additive bilingualism and/or cultural enrichment among L2 learners in anglophone communities. The teachers concerned were vulnerable - without any form of specialist pre-service training in the specifically language-orientated elements of their task, unsupported by the official system in some Regions - which, though sympathetic, themselves lacked expertise in this area and had not yet had time or funds to identify and/or train their own professional advisers in the field. For an external observer of a nascent mainstream professional exercise, therefore, gaining and retaining teachers' confidence was paramount, and school "observation" largely took the form of informal participation in, rather than systematic recording of, ongoing classroom activity. The results may serve as general *descriptive* and/or *historical* background upon which to build scientific, *prescriptive* research when the time seems appropriate - i.e. when individual programmes are more established in terms of agreed stratagems - and goals against which to measure them.

### 3.2.2 Sir John Maxwell Primary School, Glasgow

#### 3.2.2.1 School roll (October 1989)

3.2.2.1.1 (a) Whole school roll: 238 ,

(b) Gaelic Unit roll: 83

3.2.2.1.2 Classes are organised as follows: (N.B. incremental  
rise in numbers)

3.2.2.1.3 Primary 1: 18 pupils  
Primary 2/3: 24 pupils  
Primary 4/5: 24 pupils  
Primary 6/7: 17 pupils

### 3.2.2.2 Catchment area

3.2.2.2.1 (a) School catchment Sir John Maxwell Primary School is situated in Pollokshaws, on the South Side of the City of Glasgow. It is a traditional working-class district, historically a weaving village bordering the River Cart and the former country estate of a well-to-do family. Sir John Maxwell, Victorian landlord and Member of Parliament, seems to have gifted lands for the erection of schools, Town Hall, etc. Nowadays the country estate, gardens and stately home (Pollok House) are administered by Glasgow District Council, for the recreational use of the citizens of Glasgow, and the world-famous Burrell Art Gallery has been built within the estate. Urban planning in the 1960's swept away old tenement and cottage buildings and replaced them with high-rise council flats. Unemployed and single-parent families are common phenomena. More recently built are the library, Social Services complex and shopping mall - which has never realised its potential: many of the premises are permanently boarded up, existent shops are poorly stocked and seem to struggle for survival. Its (largely unused) car-park has been the scene of serious crime, and graffiti suggest gang-activity, although the local people protest that these manifestations originate from outwith the community. A memorial to "Red Clydesider" John MacLean is a reminder

of the community's radical working-class roots - MacLean operated workers' adult education programmes from within Sir John Maxwell School in the early decades of this century. The local community seems clannish, suspicious of outsiders: a forgotten folk-ballad dubbed them "The Queer Folk of the Shaws" - and older locals remember, and seem happy with, the description.

3.2.2.2.2 There are two primary schools in Pollokshaws - St Conval's Roman Catholic Primary School and Sir John Maxwell Primary (non-denominational). The latter operated originally as an all-through community school (primary and junior secondary). By the beginning of the 1980's the primary school, its traditional Victorian composition only superficially altered - by carpeting, inside toilets, bright paint-work, semi-open plan classrooms - was believed to be under threat of closure: its roll had dropped to below 100 by 1984, and the entire top floor was in disrepair, its classrooms still full of the materials dating from its use as a secondary school. There are several other non-denominational primary schools in the vicinity, some sited in modern custom-built buildings. There was considerable local resistance to the idea of school closure, however, and in 1984 the Headteacher was happy to accommodate a Gaelic play-group as part of a campaign to identify new uses for the empty sections of the building and to strengthen the school's image as a community resource. For similar reasons the premises were readily accepted by Strathclyde Regional Council officials as proposed site for the experimental Gaelic Bilingual Primary Unit (June, 1985).

3.2.2.2.3 (b) the Gaelic Unit Children in the Gaelic Unit, almost without exception, are imported from outwith the area. Only one family in the original intake already attended the school, although a few other families of Gaelic extraction lived locally: none of these opted to transfer their children to the Gaelic stream. This trend has continued. A second Gaelic Unit has now been established in Glasgow, in the north of the city and in future the catchments will be adjusted to take account of this. At present children travel to Sir John Maxwell Primary from all over Greater Glasgow. A few families have moved house ostensibly to be nearer the school, but the Regional Authority has accepted placement requests from any area of the city, and provided free transport for all but the local pupils since 1986. Some children leave home by taxi or bus before 8 a.m. and are returned at 4.30 p.m. It is a long day, especially for the infants.

3.2.2.2.4 Transportation of children was undertaken during the first session through a combination of voluntary parental cooperation and funds granted by the *Gaelic Language Promotion Trust*. It became part of Regional budgeting only after a prolonged campaign by parents and sympathetic councillors - and accepted on the grounds (a) that similar facilities already existed for the city's two specialist secondary schools (Music and Dance) and (b) that failure to transport children would compound existent socio-economic inequality. Exceptionally, placement requests have been filed by families whose motives appear to include the availability of free transport to a school seen as more "desirable" than that in which the children are presently located.

presently located. This may cause problems in motivating the children to learning through the medium of a "foreign" language. In future it may be advantageous to research more fully the motivation of parents and prospective parents, to identify attitudes towards, and expectations of, the linguistic and/or educational policies of the Unit. The social mix of the Unit, though generally heterogeneous, seems to differ somewhat from that in the host school, with the presence of a higher proportion of professional people among Gaelic Unit parents. More important, however, is parental commitment to, and interest in, their children's education. This has recently been affirmed by the election to the new School Board of *three* Gaelic Unit parents and *one* "non-Gaelic" representative (September/October, 1989) from a whole-school population whose ratio is roughly 2:3 in the opposite direction.

### 3.2.2.3 Establishment of the Unit

3.2.2.3.1 Political background The Unit was established in response to political lobbying by Comann Sgoiltean Dàchànanach Glaschu (CSDCG: *The Glasgow Gaelic Bilingual Schools Association*). Interest had been stimulated by Seumas Grannd's research into parental attitudes towards Gaelic-medium primary education outwith the Gàidhealtachd (Grannd, 1983, op cit). A local steering committee was formed, which included parents, representatives from Gaelic-related organisations (three of whom were also prospective parents) and experts in the field of Gaelic education. Open meetings were held regularly, to consult with the full membership on developments local, national and international.

3.2.2.3.2 Lobbying took the form of letter-writing to individual Education Committee members and Members of Parliament (all parties); meetings between representatives of CSDCG and the Directorate, who initially expressed reservations as to the viability of Gaelic-medium education in an anglophone area. A member of the Directorate was remitted to conduct a "feasibility study" on behalf of Strathclyde - to investigate the efficacy of comparable models; the implications in terms of funding, Gaelic staff and resource availability, the educational progress of urban children etc. A fairly lengthy delay ensued, during which letter-writing continued; funds raised through the related CSDCG Trust; an educational CSDCG sub-committee formed to conduct its own research into Gaelic-medium primary resources in preparation to assist in production if and when necessary; new parents identified and invited to meetings where research findings from other countries were introduced and discussed; prospective parental opinion on principles of school policy established (Minutes, CSDCG, 1984 - 1985).

3.2.2.3.5 The long-awaited feasibility study was equivocal: suggested that only children already bilingual would benefit from this form of education, with negative corollaries including the linguistic assessment of prospective pupils and resultant selectivity contrary to fundamental Strathclyde educational philosophy. By reiteration of the efficacy of immersion programmes in other countries, however, and by citation of the Labour Party's stated commitment to provide Gaelic education where demand exists, the Directorate was persuaded to



present to the full Education Committee proposals for the formation of an "experimental" bilingual educational programme within an existent Glasgow primary school, with detailed indications as to the timing, location, funding, resourcing and staffing of the proposed scheme (ibid).

3.2.2.3.6 Although a "unit" within a school fell far short of the original ideal as indicated by Grannnd's findings from Wales and Ireland (op cit: 144), parents voted to accede to the concept as an interim measure. A "bottom line" prescription of the proposed Unit was presented to the Directorate, in which the necessity for a clearly defined measure of organisational autonomy was requested in order to ensure the maintenance of an identifiable Gaelic ethos - a request based on research into similar Units in Wales (Appendix 3, 6.7). Possible sitings were discussed among the parents: the Unit, it was felt, should if possible be located within a community with an existent Gaelic-speaking identity - Hillhead, Hyndland and Partick appeared most likely to answer this description, as judged by parent-membership of CSDCG, known demographic trends, the location of existent Gaelic-speaking primary teachers, the availability of Gaelic churches, play-groups, meeting places etc.

3.2.2.3.7 The Directorate refused both these requests on grounds of practicality: (a) Self-containment' of the Unit was seen as administratively non-viable and socially undesirable; (b) siting of the Unit was contingent upon administrative and financial practicalities, not upon parental whim: this seemed to constitute an

acid test of parental commitment in official eyes, though representatives stressed the desirability of minimising parental uncertainty when offering an alternative, "experimental" form of education through the medium of a historically neglected language (ibid).

3.2.2.3.8 The first site offered had potential long-term advantages, but these, parents felt, might be outweighed by its short-term disadvantages. Sir John Maxwell Primary was ultimately proposed - and accepted by both sides - in June, 1985: the proposals were put before the full Education Committee in July, the Unit opened in August.

#### 3.2.2.4 Original intake of the Gaelic Bilingual Unit

3.2.2.4.1 The Regional Authority was in need of a clear (i.e. numerical) demonstration of parental demand for the Unit; the parental group, for its part, was nervous that support in principle might prove to exceed support in practice (as has been the case in almost all other subsequent initiatives). To confine the intake to Primary 1, while educationally and linguistically desirable, might prove a practical disincentive to parents of older children, desiring to keep the family together in the same school. Therefore the intake was first widened to include children entering Primaries 1 - 2, a policy which has subsequently become general practice in urban Units in Strathclyde and Lothian Regions. These, it was proposed, would form an initial composite infants' "Gaelic immersion" class. Much thought went into the decision to allow older siblings (entering Primaries 3 - 5) to form a second composite class, in which Gaelic teaching would be introduced on a more limited "enrichment" basis - a policy which has not been pursued in any other Unit. In this instance it was felt that, while the older children might not be expected to become fully bilingual, they would be exposed to a measure of Gaelic language and culture - an advantage not available to them in any other school - while their presence might assist in the social adjustment of younger siblings within a larger, geographically distant school. For subsequent years it was generally assumed that the intake would be confined to incoming P1 infants.

**3.2.2.4.4 Exceptions** It is difficult to refuse parental desire for Gaelic education - especially where the success of the Unit is to some extent measured, by the influential majority on the Education Committee, in numerical terms. The agreed policy may be said to have presented less than ideal conditions in which to establish habitual Gaelic usage in the Unit (3.2.2.4.5, below) - but in the event, even this policy was not adhered to. In face of enthusiastic demand, (a) older pupils were accepted into the initial P 3 - 5 class who had no younger sibling in the "immersion" class and (b) placement requests have been accepted each year (and at different times of the school session) for monolingual children at different stages of the primary school - some as old as Primary 6 - causing large composite classes with widely differing levels of linguistic competence, and considerable strain upon teachers attempting to satisfy at once the general educational needs of children and the linguistic expectations of parents. (cf Mackey, op cit: 11ff, for discussion of similar circumstances in the John F. Kennedy School, Berlin).

### **3.2.2.5 Linguistic policy**

**3.2.2.5.1** Linguistic policy has been, to some extent, shaped by the circumstances described above: teachers of older children, operating without language support staff or initial reception centres such as are available in parts of Wales (Appendix 4, 4.7) have had to operate pragmatically within the changing situations in their own classrooms. As happens in the JFK School, Berlin, the introduction of one

monolingual child may alter the linguistic pattern of the whole class:

3.2.2.5.1.1 "The fact that a newcomer does not understand one of the working languages places an extra burden on the school, which wishes to make sure that this unilingual student should not be retarded in his education because of his unilingualism" (Mackey, op cit: 39).

3.2.2.5.2 Yet in JFK, bilingual provision is in two major world languages, English and German, both of which are in use to some extent within the children's everyday extra-scholastic environment: in the home and/or the community at large. In central Scotland the school is the *only* source of Gaelic input for the majority of children (3.3.2.15ff, below).

3.2.2.5.3 The children in this school receive a shorter period of Gaelic immersion than their counterparts in Inverness, Skye and the Western Isles. Immersion, as defined in Wales, Canada etc, is the provision of conditions in which children may acquire sufficient linguistic competence to be able to operate successfully in an educational programme which includes substantial (or predominant) use of L2 as a medium of learning and instruction (2.5.35, above). In other Regions Gaelic-medium teaching is continued for two, sometimes three years; in Sir John Maxwell it officially lasts for only one year, though children whose general progress has been less satisfactory have recently been given an extra year in the charge of

the P1 teacher - and so, in effect, an extra year's immersion (this does not pertain in session 1989-90, owing to high P1 intake).

3.2.2.5.4 In the Irish-medium school in Belfast (Appendix 4) - which presents a comparable model, Gaelic-medium teachers do not expect whole-sentence production from even the most able pupils until the end of Primary 1. Additionally, (a) pupils have already attended full-time Irish-medium nursery classes within the school for two years previously: no exceptions are made to this rule however disappointing this may be for parents of excluded children (Gaelic Unit pupils in Sir John Maxwell are more likely to have attended full-time *English-medium* Nursery Schools - 3.3.1.7.1, below); and (b) full Irish immersion continues for another two years, English literacy being deferred until the end of Primary 3, when "children slip into it quite readily" (Appendix 4, 2.6, below). In Northern Ireland these policies are pursued under far greater political pressure to succeed academically in both languages than can be imagined in Glasgow; classes are, on the whole, larger than those in Glasgow; children come, overwhelmingly, from socio-economically deprived backgrounds and pursue their schooling against a backcloth of urban guerilla warfare (Grannnd, op cit: 64). The efficacy of the linguistic policy is indicated by pupils' consistent 100% success-rate in the 11+ examination (now Irish-medium, previously English-medium); Belfast children's English reading ability has been tested at P's 4 and 7 and compared with English-medium controls; children typically present a "delay" in English reading of over a year at P4, equality or superiority in competence by P7 (Appendix 5, 2.6).

3.2.2.5.4 In general terms the linguistic policy in Sir John Maxwell seems to be one of language immersion during the first year of primary schooling, during which time Gaelic is used by the teacher across all areas, curricular and interactive, and children encouraged to begin production as and when they feel confident. This may, in some cases, be almost immediate (though codes may be mixed and structure and lexis primitive); in others this stage may only be reached gradually towards the end of the first year. At first, due to lack of appropriate Gaelic reading material English reading was introduced towards the end of the first year, which was seen by the majority of parents as counter-productive in terms of language acquisition. However teachers were under considerable pressure - not only from their immediate (non-Gaelic speaking) superiors, whose concerns were rooted in traditional pedagogic rather than linguistic considerations, but also from their colleagues in the rest of the school: the relatively small classes in the Gaelic Unit, and unfamiliarity with the added work involved, caused an undercurrent of invidious comparison between "upstairs" and "downstairs" and their relative achievements in the only terms familiar to non-Gaelic speaking staff ("which book your lot are on in SPNG/Ginn" etc).

3.2.2.5.5 More recently a reading scheme, commissioned by Strathclyde in translation from a Welsh original, has been used to introduce infant reading at the P1 stage, but this has been slow in publication, interrupting the desired progression of "graded" Gaelic reading into Primaries 2 and 3. The teachers themselves have been involved in

preparation for publication of an illustrated Gaelic phonic scheme, involving word-games, puzzles etc.

3.2.2.5.6 After Primary 1 linguistic policy appears to be shaped pragmatically by teachers in response to changing circumstances within each class (though linguistic policy has been under discussion within the school during the past session - results as yet unknown). Thus as far as possible Gaelic has been used for topic-related work (environmental studies, language arts projects etc) and for social interaction. A policy exists for the teaching of mathematics through an English scheme (*Scottish Primary Maths Group*) in Sir John Maxwell, despite the existence of a Gaelic translation. However teachers utilise Gaelic in initial oral explication of mathematics work, and are to be involved in piloting a Gaelic-medium mathematics scheme currently in preparation as part of Inter-authority resource development. But official interpretation of "bilingual education" as implying the use of both languages concurrently by class-teachers from a relatively early stage may have, in the first four years, produced a model not recommended by any of the available research from other countries (2.5.35, above). The alternative policy favoured in other regions - of using Gaelic exclusively across the curriculum for a much longer initial period, with gradual introduction of English reading at P 3 - 4 - reflects what is seen as optimum practice in immersion programmes in Wales, Ireland and Canada, and these are perhaps more meaningfully classified as "bilingual" education by dint of producing effective *bilinguals*, able to benefit from education in either language at later stages in the educational process (*ibid*).



3.2.2.5.7 Gaelic usage by pupils within the Unit seems, perhaps inevitably, to have been affected by all these factors. While most children above Primary 1 appear to understand everyday functional (i.e. "classroom") Gaelic - especially when delivered in the accustomed tones and accent of their own teacher - the majority do not seem consistently and unquestioningly to use Gaelic for productive - and especially spontaneous - purposes as observed, for example, in Inverness. Only those with Gaelic home backgrounds appear able to produce extended, or even whole-sentence responses with any degree of fluency and self-confidence. Children who were immersed in Gaelic in Primary 1 seem more at ease with the language, though their production may be limited; most of those who arrived later in their school career are still recognisable by their discomfiture when encouraged to use Gaelic, and may be prompted *sotto voce* by sympathetic class-mates. Code-switching and parallel usage of both languages can seem the kindest, or the quickest, or sometimes even the safest, strategy, and can itself become an unconscious habit. This situation will be seen to present far from ideal circumstances for language acquisition. Perhaps most discouraging is the change in habitual linguistic usage among some native-speaking bilingual children - viz the comment of one mother (Case study 1, below) that her daughter, aged five, "decided to stop using Gaelic in school until the others catch up": this girl, now eight, consistently replies in English to her Gaelic-speaking parents within the home (cf Skuttnab-Kangas, 1988: 16 - 17 - for discussion of how "mother-tongue" may alter - sometimes several times - with changing circumstances during the speaker's life). The recent promotion of a member of the Gaelic Unit staff to a non-teaching

administrative/support rôle seems a major step towards official recognition of the special needs of both pupils and staff in the Gaelic Unit, and in-house linguistic policy discussions seem about to bear fruit.

3.2.2.6 Cultural enrichment On the other hand parents consistently praise the Unit for the general education and, especially, cultural enrichment they feel it has provided. This is confirmed by an HMI Report on practice within the whole school (Scottish Education Department, March 1988) in which the contribution of Gaelic Unit staff wins special mention on several counts. Gaelic Unit teachers have attended In-service courses - both Gaelic- and English-medium - and skilfully adapted the resultant expertise to their own specific situations. The authorities have provided tuition on (a) bagpipes and (b) clàrsach within the school. Voluntary assistance has been given regularly by parents and interested outsiders in many aspects of the creative and performing arts. Pupils have taken part in a wide variety of public events - drama, dance, puppetry, etc. - in addition to performing at the Mòd as soloists and choristers.

3.2.2.7 Resources Gaelic-medium teaching resources were scarce when this Unit and its counterpart in Inverness were established. Existent reading materials had been produced by Comhairle nan Eilean's Bilingual Project (3.1 above) and, in terms of general content, reflected thecrofting communities from which they had originated. While these were seen to be useful from a general "cultural enrichment" point of view, they had obvious disadvantages in teaching urban infants to read. However they were used, as was every other available Gaelic book - soon exhausted, many already

familiar through their use in Gaelic play-groups, and none particularly relevant to the special needs of older children with limited knowledge of the language. In common with their colleagues in other minority language situations, teachers had to produce many of their own materials but in Sir John Maxwell the task was rendered more difficult by Strathclyde's being unable to sanction (for reasons of copyright) the use of already published English material "pasted-over" with Gaelic translations. This method - the cornerstone of early Welsh-medium teaching - was adopted by Highland Regional Council, who also provided full-time professional assistance in producing Gaelic materials. The copyright stricture has recently been resolved by Strathclyde, and a word-processor is to be used for short-term resource production in future. Inter-authority cooperation is providing a steady trickle of more permanent resources. However there can be little comparison between the working conditions of teachers in this Unit, supplying the needs of children of all ages from P1 - 7, and those of their colleagues in Inverness, with much smaller classes advancing up the school on a yearly incremental basis (3.2.3, below).

### 3.2.2.8 Staffing

3.2.2.8.1 Two teachers were originally seconded to staff the Unit on a temporary basis. Each had a composite class of around a dozen children, divided as per P 1 - 2 and P 3 - 5 (numbers altered throughout the year). Permanent posts were advertised shortly after the beginning of the first term, and two teachers appointed who commenced in post at the beginning of December. The appointees had both gained their experience in Comhairle nan Eilean's Bilingual Primary scheme. Paradoxically, this experience may have been less relevant than initially supposed. The Bilingual Project has been, as already suggested (see section 3.1, above), concerned more with language maintenance among native Gaelic-speakers than with L2 teaching to non-Gaelic speakers (MacIntyre, Mitchell, et al, 1987). Thus in schools with a higher proportion of native Gaelic speaking children, usage of Gaelic as a medium of education has tended to be higher - and the converse seems to have pertained in areas of greater linguistic shift. To be confronted by whole classes almost entirely consisting of non-Gaelic speaking children, whose parents nonetheless expected them to be taught through the medium of Gaelic across substantial areas of the curriculum, must have been, to say the least, a strange experience for these teachers, especially where none of their immediate superiors had experience in the field of second language teaching and looked to *them* to supply the expertise.

3.2.2.8.2 The prevalent educational philosophy in the mainstream school was - and is - firmly established on current concepts of progressive practice: group and individual rather than whole-class teaching; encouragement of independent learning through the integrated day; pupil-generated discovery rather than teacher-directed learning etc. All of this presupposes the existence of an adequate supply of flexible resources, none is particularly conducive of perhaps the most necessary ingredient of first-stage immersion teaching, namely continuous and sustained oral L2 input: i.e. the teacher, as the main if not the only available source of comprehensible verbal input, talks almost incessantly, utilising the classroom situation and the general social and curricular requirements of pupils as a continuing source of developmental language (Krashen and Terrell, 1983:77). The teacher in the Inverness Gaelic Unit, whose training and experience dated from many years previously, and whose more recent involvement in education was confined to the Gaelic play-group movement, felt herself to be at a severe pedagogic disadvantage; however it may be that the reverse was in fact true.

3.2.2.8.3 In 1986 a third teacher was appointed to teach the immersion P 1 class - a remit which has been relatively better defined, less under pressure from the influence of whole-school policy, than that pertaining to later stages in the Unit. It has recently been mooted that Gaelic immersion should be extended to a two-year period, a proposal which appears to have been welcomed by staff and parents alike. Subsequent increases in the roll of the Unit have necessitated the appointment of a fourth teacher, but class

numbers have in some cases risen well above that recommended by other regions (3.2.2.1.3, above).

### 3.2.2.9 Integration of pupils

3.2.2.9.1 An HMI Report on Welsh Bilingual Units in Cardiff (cf Appendix 4, 6.7.3, below) clearly acknowledges the difficulties in successfully stimulating and maintaining Welsh language usage in a minority Unit housed within an anglophone school. The understanding of the Headteacher seems paramount, especially in acknowledging the importance - indeed necessity - of allowing the minority to enjoy a range of experiences through the medium of the minority language, even where this may mean running separate events for each half of the school and sacrificing "integration" of pupils on the altar of linguistic and cultural development. In fact the Report suggests that there may be *no* practical solution to the conflicting and equally desirable objectives implicit in either argument, and concludes that autonomous Welsh-medium primary schools offer the requisite ethos without the attendant frictions.

3.2.2.9.2 There seem to have been occasions when these desiderata - (a) linguistic opportunity for the minority and (b) integration within a whole-school ambience and/or a measure of cultural enrichment for the majority - have come into conflict within Sir John Maxwell School. Assemblies, for example, have consistently been organised in such a way as to bring the whole school together, depriving the Gaelic Unit of Gaelic-medium experience while allowing the majority of English-

speaking pupils to "hear a little Gaelic" in the form of a hymn or a prayer. There are many occasions or circumstances which Gaelic Unit children have become accustomed to associate with English usage, and unfortunately they are all too often the most high-profile and enjoyable in the school calendar (parties, school trips, sports days, prize-giving etc). It is an area of high sensitivity: on the one hand children need to coexist and Gaelic Unit children do not want to be deprived of facilities on offer to the rest of the school; on the other it would be a loss if the presence of the specialist minority Unit did not heighten the awareness and positively affect the school experience of the majority. However modern urban-dwelling children are less likely to identify positively with Gaelic if it is not seen to be viable in every context and associated in their minds with the most pleasurable and "important" of their school experiences.

**3.2.2.10 Conclusions** The Unit has been highly successful in terms of numerical support, and this must indicate general parental satisfaction with the educational programme on offer in addition to loyalty to the concept of Gaelic education. However there seems little doubt that the Unit is more successful as regards general cultural enrichment than language acquisition. The former might be a reasonable alternative goal to pursue within this particular Unit, if staff and parents are (a) fully in agreement with this more limited objective and (b) realistically advised as to its possible implications as regards Gaelic-medium subject teaching at secondary level. The Welsh HMI Report already cited (3.2.2.9.1, above) suggests that in some bilingual Units staff might be more efficiently deployed in pursuing regular discrete cells of "purposeful second language

teaching" rather than attempting to use the language as a means of instruction in a relatively unsystematic fashion across the curriculum, though, the Report indicates, this would be unlikely to lead to levels of linguistic competence sufficient to allow L2-medium education to commence at secondary level. Circumstances seem to have militated against the systematic progression of Gaelic-medium education in the Unit, but the appointment of a non-teaching Assistant Head augurs well for future policy.



**ADDENDUM** Since the preceding section was written parents in Sir John Maxwell Primary School have received a letter from the Assistant Head Teacher (10.11.89) to the effect that as from and including the present school session (1989 - 90) the Gaelic Unit's linguistic policy will include the continuance of Gaelic immersion for *two years*, instead of one year - an indication (a) of Strathclyde's determination to improve the linguistic potential of the Unit, and (b) of the efficacy of its stratagem in appointing a promoted, non-teaching staff-member as the Unit's official spokes-person to focus attention on linguistic policy and effect necessary changes (cf HMI Report, 1988, in which such a post was recommended for the Unit).

### 3.2.2.11 Transfer to secondary

3.2.2.11.1 In 1988 the original P5 class (eight children) were due to transfer to the secondary level. Strathclyde Regional Council officials consulted fully with parents as to the best type of provision for these pupils. The related secondary school (Shawlands Academy) had no Gaelic Department, and was already over-crowded. The authority therefore proposed to parents that a Gaelic Department (or "Unit") should be established in Hillpark Secondary School - equidistant from the primary school, and with ample spare accommodation. Parents were initially suspicious of this proposal, feeling (a) that measures taken to ensure integration of primary pupils into a whole-school atmosphere in Sir John Maxwell would be invalidated by separation of the group from their English-medium peers at this juncture and (b) that Gaelic should, to enjoy a higher status, be situated in the more overtly "prestigious" of the two schools: Shawlands is over-crowded by virtue of its popularity - success rate in examinations etc.

3.2.2.11.2 However, after visiting the two schools concerned, parents decided to accede to the official proposal, on the understanding that such a move would permit the Region to develop secondary Gaelic teaching in two important directions: (a) use of Gaelic as a medium of instruction in some curricular areas and (b) adult education. Two teachers were appointed, one of whom was given a more developmental remit in terms of producing resources in preparation for Gaelic-medium

subject teaching of History. The Scottish Examination Board was approached by the Strathclyde Directorate, and agreed in principle to the assessment through Gaelic at Standard Grade of secondary pupils educated through Gaelic. It is hoped that in future other Social Science subject teaching may be added to the Gaelic-medium battery.

3.2.2.11.3 The Hillpark Gaelic Unit is as yet small-scale. Pupils in the 1988 intake did not receive Gaelic-medium instruction in History, as it was felt that (a) staff should be given adequate time to produce satisfactory course material and (b) the pupils themselves might not be sufficiently proficient in Gaelic to benefit from such a course (subsequent intakes would, presumably, be more and more proficient). However they have been taught Gaelic as a subject, and have had additional input in terms of Gaelic-medium registration classes. Two parents successfully studied Gaelic to Higher Grade in the school during the first year.

3.2.2.11.4 There were some initial problems regarding integration of this small group within the school, though these seem largely to have been resolved, and the pupils are making good all-round progress (Mac Lulich, n.d., noted in the course of his research that problems of integration into the secondary school are almost invariably social, not educational - uncompleted M. Phil thesis, Glasgow University Department of Education). The second intake has settled into the school with less trauma, and the History course has been embarked upon, although not as yet fully Gaelic-medium.

3.2.2.12 **Strathclyde Regional Council Gaelic Initiatives Advisory Committee** After the establishment of Sir John Maxwell Primary School Gaelic Unit it was decided by the Region to set up an advisory committee, with representation from (a) school staff; (b) Jordanill Teacher Training College; (c) Glasgow University Department of Education; (d) Comunn na Gàidhlig, and (e) parents - in addition to the Regional officer-member core. This has provided a useful forum for discussion, and has now been extended to include parents and staff of Hillpark Secondary School and Meadowburn Primary School Gaelic Unit.

3.2.2.13 **Comunn nam Pàrant (*The Parents' Association*)** Parents, widely scattered across the city, felt the need to meet and (a) socialise, (b) discuss matters relating to the special education their children were receiving. This was seen as additional to and not exclusive of membership of the whole-school Parent-teacher Association or of the Schools' Council. After some initial difficulties in persuading the authorities of the value of such an organisation, the Association was established, meets regularly within the school and has "open invitation" arrangements with staff. It has been especially effective in ensuring that parents' views are represented in Advisory Committee meetings (3.2.2.12, above). It has also been a vehicle for social events - dances, a Gaelic pantomime, etc - and fund-raising: Comunn nam Pàrant raised money to send P7 children on an educational exchange visit to a school in the Western Isles (1988) - an arrangement which has since been taken up, organised and funded by the Region.

3.2.2.14 Comann Sgoiltean Dàchànanach Glaschu (CSDCG) This group has continued in existence, widening its remit to include schools throughout Greater Glasgow: thus it helped to coordinate parental desire for a Gaelic Unit in Meadowburn Primary School Bishopbriggs (q.v. below) and raised funds to provide electronic equipment for each Unit. It has continued to lobby for improved status of Gaelic in education nationally and mounts occasional lectures on Gaelic education. Its membership now includes parents from both Gaelic Units.

### 3.2.3 Central School, Inverness

#### 3.2.3.1 School roll

3.2.3.1.1 (a) Whole school roll (October 1989): 276

(b) Gaelic Unit roll:	P4/5: 12
	P2/3: 11
	P1 : 20
	TOTAL : 43

(c) Gaelic nursery : 14

#### 3.2.3.2 Catchment

3.2.3.2.1 The school, as its name implies, is situated close to the town-centre of Inverness, and serves a heterogeneous residential area which includes established terraced, traditional detached and semi-detached owner-occupier property and a council housing scheme. In the near vicinity are (a) a small Episcopalian school and (b) the town's only Roman Catholic primary; other Inverness primary schools serve the well-to-do suburbs and more recently built housing schemes on the town's periphery. Central School has a fairly representative cross-sectional population, and is well-used in the evening for leisure and recreational pursuits by families living in its vicinity. The Gaelic Unit, established in August 1985, serves the whole of the town and its

outlying districts - from as far away as Drumnadrochit. Free transport has been provided since 1988 for all children outwith the catchment.

3.2.3.2.2 The town itself is relatively free of the social and educational problems found in some parts of Glasgow. It is well-served with schools, Further Education centres, public transport, shops, banks, hospitals, hotels etc - the administrative centre of Highland Region and the Highlands and Islands Development Board. The Eden Court Theatre provides dramatic and musical productions for the whole Highland area.

3.2.3.2.3 Inverness is also the centre of a considerable amount of Gaelic-related activity: some already established when the Gaelic Unit was set up - e.g. The Gaelic Society of Inverness, An Comann Gàidhealach and Comann Luchd-ionnsachaidh (CLI - *the Gaelic Learners' Association*); some in the process of establishment within the town in 1985: Comhairle nan Sgoiltean Araich (CNSA) and Comann na Gàidhlig (CNAG) both use Inverness as their national headquarters, and BBC Rèidio nan Gaidheal operates a regular local and national Gaelic service from Radio Highland premises in Inverness. There is a tradition of Highland cultural activity, notably piping, and a private Trust is attempting to transform a local A-listed Georgian building into a Gaelic cultural resource-centre.

### 3.2.3.3 The establishment of the Unit

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### 3.2.3.3 The establishment of the Unit



3.2.3.3.1 As with Sir John Maxwell School (3.2.2, above) the Unit was established as a result of combined parental demand and political pressure. One couple had refused to send their children to school until Gaelic-medium facilities were available: the two children (twins) thus entered P1 aged six, fully competent Gaelic-speakers. The Education Officer of An Comunn Gàidhealach coordinated activities similar to those in Glasgow. The parental pressure group, Pàrantan airson Foghlam Gàidhlig (PFG) - *Parents for Gaelic Education* - was efficient, producing a well-designed leaflet promoting the concept of Gaelic bilingualism and its educational advantages (PFG, n.d). Among the original group was the national coordinator of CLI (3.2.3.2.3, above) and the administrator of CNSA (the Gaelic Play-group Association).

3.2.3.3.3 Gaelic was already well-established within the mainstream educational system, with a Regional Gaelic Adviser and a supportive Gaelic-speaking HMI both based within the town, and a Regional Education Committee which included some Gaelic-speaking representatives. Gaelic was available as a discrete subject at both secondary and primary levels - the latter through a scheme of peripatetic subject-teaching dating from the Invernessshire Gaelic Scheme in the 1960's (1.2.47, above). Thus PFG policy was clear-cut: subject teaching, though available, was not sufficient to produce (or maintain) bilingualism within an anglophone urban community; so-called "bilingual" teaching was seen as inadequate to maintain current levels of bilingualism even in the Western Isles. The only viable alternative was full and prolonged language immersion, leading to a

bilingual model in which Gaelic (as the minority language) was given precedence over the dominant language (English) throughout the primary stage at least.

3.2.3.3.4 Though initially resistant to major alterations in its established policies, Highland Regional Council Education Committee has subsequently fully espoused the concept of Gaelic-medium development throughout the Region. Under the Chairmanship of a Gaelic-speaking Lewisman who had previously served in a similar capacity in Comhairle nan Eilean, the Committee produced a carefully researched policy document (HRC, January 1986) which described Gaelic-medium and Gaelic subject teaching provision in terms of a continuous and complementary process from pre-school through to secondary. Further support personnel have been employed by the Region in accordance with stated policy: a Primary Curriculum Development Officer post was established in 1987; professional resource development assistance has been available to Gaelic teachers since before the inception of the Gaelic Unit. On the other hand Highland Regional Council was more equivocal regarding the provision of free transportation of pupils than its counterpart in Strathclyde, perhaps owing to the more "independent" tradition of local politics in Highland areas, perhaps owing to anticipated pressure from Roman Catholic parents to make similar provision for their children. Transportation was finally agreed upon in 1988, and the Roman Catholic children are now similarly provided for.

3.2.3.4 Housing the Gaelic Unit At first Gaelic Unit children were educated alongside their English-speaking peers in a classroom in the separate Infant Block of Central School. However internal changes within the school have recently transformed this into near-ideal premises: the English-speaking infants have been moved into another building, leaving the Gaelic Unit in a separate building, with its own central hall from which classrooms radiate; its own entrance, cloakroom and toilet facilities; alternative staffroom accommodation. The Unit today includes an official, professionally-run Gaelic Nursery; voluntary Gaelic Play-group and Mother and Toddlers group; it has the exclusive use of audio-visual resources and on-site office equipment (photo-copier etc) for hand-made short-term resource production. The Headteacher fully respects the Unit's need for autonomy in these practical terms, and staff are free to choose the degree to which they feel children may benefit from participation in whole-school activities. For most practical purposes such participation has been minimal with, it seems, no ill-effect in terms of play-ground relationships. The existence of the Gaelic Nursery class has made local non-Gaelic speaking parents more aware of the Unit's potential relevance to their own children, (nursery places generally are at a premium in Inverness) and the Headteacher has made it plain to prospective nursery parents that their children's attendance implies a level of commitment to Gaelic-medium primary education. The results of this policy are evident in the sudden increase in P1 intake this session (3.2.3.1.1 above): the large majority of this year's P1 are nursery class "graduates".

### 3.2.3.5 Original intake

3.2.3.5.1 Highland Regional Council confined the original intake to P1, despite the disappointment this policy might cause within individual families. The Region had originally stipulated a minimum of 10 children before they would agree to supply "a teacher and a classroom". However they have since pledged that Gaelic-medium education will be provided "where there is a likelihood of at least four pupils at each stage for the foreseeable future....where there is sufficient spare accommodation and staff available" (HRC, op cit). Nine children were enrolled in 1985, four the following year; eight in 1987 and four in 1988: compare 1989, 20 children.

3.2.3.6 There can be little doubt that a small single-tier class is the ideal starting-point for such a programme, not only in terms of teacher confidence and the gradual build-up of resources, but also as regards the establishment of the desired habitual linguistic patterns. The older children in Central have thus been instrumental in encouraging their younger companions to use Gaelic: this Unit is notable for the natural and unselfconscious manner in which all children, even in P1, use Gaelic with the teacher, with visitors and among themselves, despite the lack of linguistic input available to most outwith the school (3.3.2, below). Appendix 3, 6.2 (below) describes a school in Cardiff where linguistic usage is similarly well-established between peers: the Headteacher attributes this trend to the presence of fluent Welsh-speaking children in the original

intake, although those children have long since left the school and few now enter as native speakers. The same may be true of Inverness: several of the original intake were well-established Gaelic speakers.

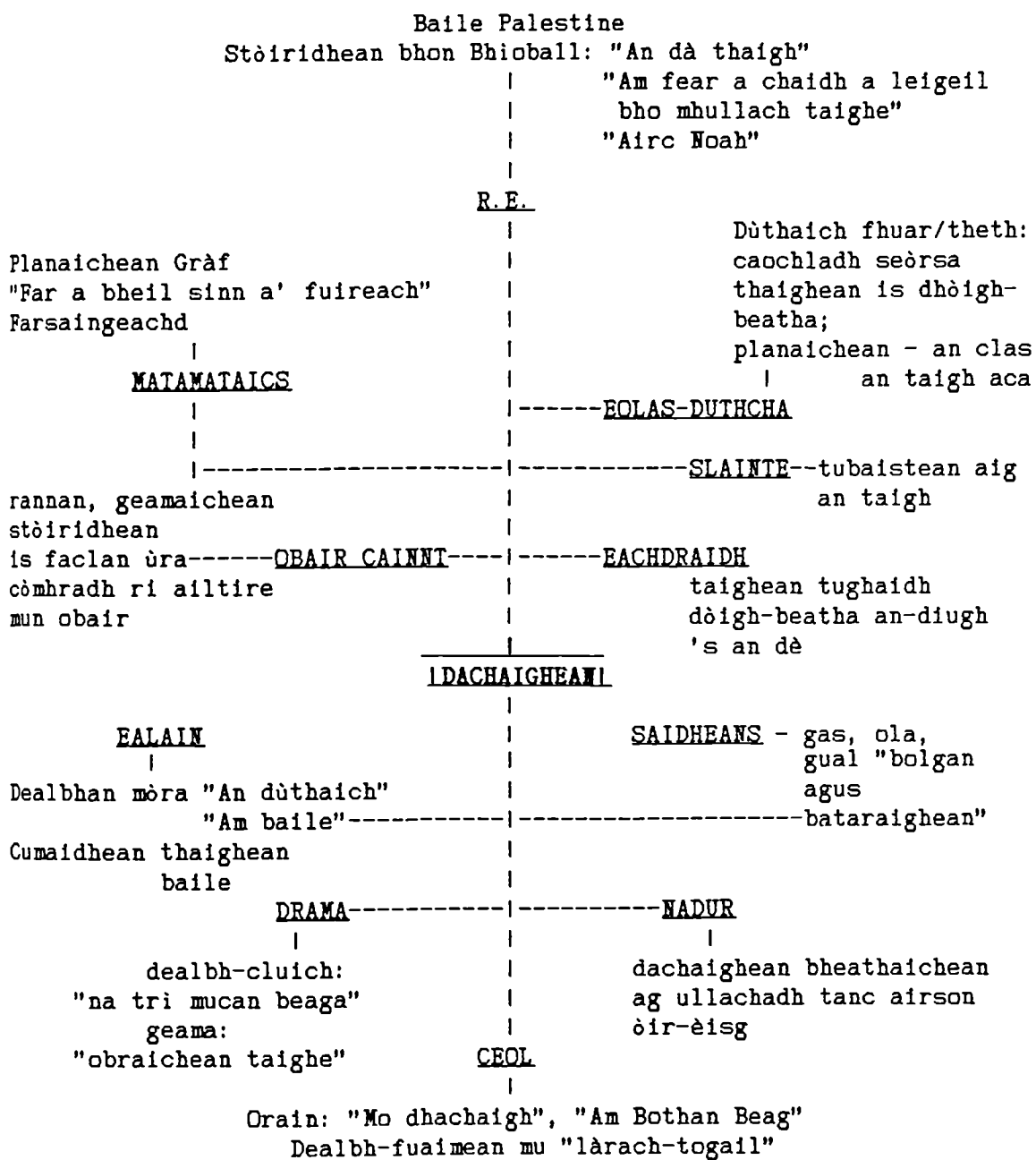
3.2.3.7 There were native Gaelic speaking children in the original intake at Sir John Maxwell Primary also (3.2.2, above) but they were "swamped" linguistically by the high numbers of non-Gaelic speaking children in each of the two classes. It has been suggested from research into bilingual programmes in Canada (McLaughlin, op cit: 163) that an admixture of native speakers and learners is an inhibiting factor to language acquisition among the L2 learners (commonly they are taught in separate classes for the first year). This was also posited by one Glasgow parent (Case Study 11, below), though not noted as a problem by Welsh or Irish teachers interviewed during the course of the present study. However a Western Isles school was observed where one solitary non-Gaelic speaking boy was having to endure a certain amount of teasing mimicry from his Gaelic-speaking classmates, and there can be little doubt that such a situation requires very careful handling by the teacher concerned if the exercise is to be equally relevant, profitable and enjoyable for all concerned.

3.2.3.5 Exceptions No exceptions have been made to this policy: children are not admitted except into P1 at the beginning of a session, though Highland Region suggest there may be exceptional circumstances (e.g. if a placement request occurred from a child, already fluent in Gaelic and/or experienced in Gaelic-medium education in another Region). Such a request has recently been accepted in a school in Skye, also within Highland

Region. It would certainly appear desirable that some degree of flexibility exist to accommodate today's highly-mobile population, but on the other hand it might be hard to administer in some instances without the introduction of an undesirable element of linguistic assessment.

**3.2.3.6 Linguistic policy** Gaelic is used almost exclusively by the Primary 1 teacher from the first day. Emphasis is on oral work throughout the first year, and "play" is considered to be of paramount importance even to P2 and 3 children. Literacy is deferred until children's command of spoken Gaelic is well-established. "Teacher talk" is seen as the most important classroom resource during this period, along with contextual aids to comprehension and linguistic reinforcement: mathematical equipment, toys, and *objets trouvés*; child's play, costume, mime and rôle-play; art, craft, AVA materials; rhymes, songs and games, word-games, guessing games etc: these are commonplace within any infant classroom, but the emphasis here is always upon verbal communication, the desired progression from aural input to oral production, rather than from oral + manual skill to reading and writing as in unilingual classrooms: in Central the infant teacher is more likely to be taking tea in the "house corner" than sticking stars on "news books". Yet the children learn to read and write. English reading books are not introduced until the end of P3 - when children "steam ahead". From the end of P1 the curricular programme is parallel to that in any primary school, except for the medium through which it is conducted and for the presence of an extra curricular area - English language arts. Fig. 1, below, demonstrates a typical cross-curricular thematic topic plan ("*Homes*") written by one of the teachers for use with her P3/4 class.

## Inverness



### 3.2.3.7 Assessment of children's progress

3.2.3.7.1 Recent legislation has decreed the introduction of national testing at P's 4 and 7. It will obviously be inappropriate to test children in Gaelic Units by the same mechanisms as those to be used in other schools (the exact nature of the testing devices is as yet uncertain). The Regional Councils involved in Gaelic-medium education have already voiced their concern - both individually and collectively - on this matter, and it appears certain that special arrangements will be made to assess children in an appropriate fashion. In the case of Central School Inverness this will probably mean the use of Gaelic-medium mechanisms at the P4 stage. It is unclear where children in Sir John Maxwell would be placed in this situation, in that their *English* reading-skills may be less highly developed at P4, while their Gaelic comprehension seems liable to have been affected by the shorter immersion period. It would seem important that language policies in all Gaelic Units be firmly established before the introduction of national testing. Meanwhile Highland Region has already implemented its own internal assessment of the children in their Gaelic Units by Gaelic-speaking educational psychologists. Details of their findings are not available at present.

3.2.3.8 Grammatical structure Teachers in Central School have devised some clever methods of reinforcing some of the more complex structures of Gaelic. One of these (below) is a popular song - much requested by the children - which introduces past and future tense for all the Gaelic irregular verbs: "*I went to school today/I will go tomorrow*" etc:



AN DE AGUS A MAIREACH

(air fonn "*Skip to my Lou my darling*")

Chaidh mi dhan an sgoil an-dè

(3 tursan)

Thèid mi dhan sgoil a-màireach

Chunnaic mi Crisdean san sgoil an-dè....

Chi mi Crisdean a-màireach

Rinn mi obair san sgoil an-dè.....

Ni mi obair a-màireach

Fhuair mi rionnag san sgoil an-dè.....

Gheibh mi rionnag a-màireach

Thug mi biadh san sgoil an-dè.....

Bheir mi biadh innt' a-màireach

Chuala mi stòiridh san sgoil an-dè.....

Cluinnidh mi stòiridh a-màireach

Rug mi air Sim san sgoil an-dè.....

Beiridh mi air a-màireach

Thàinig Mamaidh dhan sgoil an-dè.....

Thig i dhan sgoil a-màireach

3.2.3.9 Conclusions This Gaelic Unit would seem to have progressed in systematic fashion: from small beginnings it is growing steadily - in terms of numerical support, resources, autonomy and, above all, linguistic competence. If present trends continue one may predict that it will comprise around eighty children by 1992 - and will be virtually autonomous, with linguistic continuity for its children from the ages of two to twelve. Highland Regional "is currently investigating the level of demand for and the feasibility of providing Gaelic medium education at secondary level from 1992 on" (HRC, n.d: 9).

### 3.2.4 Thumbnail sketches of ten bilingual Units in Scotland

3.2.4.1 Gaelic in a corridor, Skye The Gaelic Unit was established in 1986, with four children. They were taught in a corridor - a very comfortable, carpeted, book-lined corridor, certainly - but the only route from one classroom to another for all passing trade. There are now ten children, in a single composite class (P1 - 4) and they have recently been promoted - to the dining-hall. The Head hopes there will soon be a new school built, and the wandering Gaelic class will be settled at last. This is an anglicised part of the island, and few of the children are native speakers. They have been immersed in the language since P1 and when I visit them they speak only Gaelic, with a fairly high degree of unabashed mixing - English lexis freely incorporated into a thoroughly Gaelic structural frame-work. Their teacher has suffered long bouts of illness, and their "supply" has been a Gaelic learner, the mother of two of the children. She is English - I think (hard to be sure when speaking Gaelic): "the children help me along - their Gaelic's much better than mine". She feels the "proper" teacher's absences have affected the children's linguistic progress. But they are cheerful, talkative and ask a lot of questions. When I ask to visit them again I am turned down - courteously but firmly - by the Head: "they've had enough to put up with lately" he says. I speak to their "proper" teacher later, on the mainland: she is worried about the low intake - "it could be years before I get enough children for a second teacher. I could have P1 - 7 in the one class: it's a lot, on top of the immersion". I call a meeting in the village to try and drum up more

support. Only one couple appears, and they have already enrolled their child. This year a part-time teacher shares some of the burden.

3.2.4.2 Gaelic in the medical room, Skye Seventeen miles down the single-track road, near Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (Gaelic College) 13 children (P1 - 3) are squeezed into the medical room. "We use the hall most of the time, but we have to move out when they start setting the tables for dinner. It means I can't put their work up on the wall and we're always lifting stuff out and in". The first time I visit, the teacher apologises for her "awful Lewis Gaelic". She feels linguistically inadequate for Gaelic-medium teaching, especially as the children become older. The Region had difficulty staffing the Gaelic Unit, and the present teacher, already in post in the school, reluctantly agreed to "take it on temporarily". The second time I visit - six months later - the subject seems forgotten. The children are completely at home in Gaelic - and so, it seems, is the teacher. We all sing songs together while the children go in pairs to choose their Gaelic library books - mostly "pasted-overs": "we get them from the Region. They're very good that way. We have plenty of books, really - for this age, anyway" the teacher says. The children compare books with one another as they come back into the room - "have you read this one" or "I didn't like that one - it was boring": they speak Gaelic together quite naturally, though a high proportion hear no Gaelic in the home. After the children have gone home I ask the teacher to write a short progress report for the Gaelic newsletter: "oh I couldn't possibly do that. My Gaelic's not nearly good enough for that. I'll write it in English and you can translate it for me". This year there are 17 children - and they have

been found a classroom. Two teachers, now, and they use the work-area for half the class, team-teaching for parts of the day. Things are looking up.

3.2.4.3 **Anything for a wall, Skye** This Unit now has 27 children (P1 - 4) and two teachers. When I visited them first their only complaint was that they "couldn't get peace from one another: the infants make so much noise, and I talk so much to them, poor Miss \_\_\_\_\_ can't get on with the older ones at all". They have erected a curtain, but "what good's a curtain. You can't hang things on a curtain". The second time I visit they are the proud possessors of a wall. It is full - on both sides - with children's work. This is a remarkable Gaelic Unit - remarkable for its children and for its teachers. The P1 teacher is an unconscious linguist: she never stops talking for a moment - in a rich, idiomatic, local dialect, and a humorous, idiosyncratic teaching style all her own. She beseeches the children not to let their poor teacher down, she is devastated that they have not done their very best for their poor teacher, words cannot express how pleased she is that they have done so well, the visitor will see what wonderful children there are in Skye....The infant room is a maze of corners and hidey-holes, rich with stimuli of every kind. The walls - all four - are overcrowded with projects and pictures and penguins: "tell the visitor what a funny name he has - that's right - oh my thousand blessings on you, what clever children: 'white head'. 'White head' - what a funny name for a bird with a black head...." The children on the other side of the wall are different. This is very much the "big class". Serious work is going on in here. Visitors will be tolerated, but not allowed to interrupt. Trying to explain the unusual atmosphere I suddenly realise there is only one girl among all these boys. They have been doing a project on "The Celts". There

are artefacts everywhere: I suppose they must be plasticene - but they look like stone and bronze. Three children are working on a computer programme: "The Shop". They have to choose what clothes to buy: "Whoever wrote this programme must have been from Lewis" one boy says. "He uses 'geansaidh' instead of 'peitean'." In this Unit there is no question of anyone speaking English. The teacher is surprised I even asked: "Oh we do an English lesson" she says airily "but we always talk it over in Gaelic first. I don't think about it at all. You just do all the things you'd be doing anyway. You just use Gaelic instead". (But very few of them were Gaelic speakers three years ago). She is a probationer, straight out of College. "I think I am so lucky, to be able to come back to my own island to teach in Gaelic".

**3.2.4.4 Noah's Ark, Skye** This Unit has just started when I visit for the first time. It would have begun in August, but the teacher was having a baby. "It didn't make too much difference" the teacher tells me "They were in next door. Mrs \_\_\_\_\_ talks a lot of Gaelic with her class anyway". How times change, I think to myself. Mrs \_\_\_\_\_ used not to speak much Gaelic at all. This is a crofting community - the most Gaelic part of Skye. Out of seven little P1's only one has opted for "the bilingual". All the rest are in the Gaelic-medium Unit. It is almost Christmas, and we sing about "Bodach na Nollaige" (*Father Christmas*). On my second visit the teacher is telling the story of Noah's Ark, skilfully using a flannelgraph. The children find each animal in the box, make it go up to the Ark, make it go into the Ark. After the flood subsides, the animals come out of the Ark, go into the box. We go to the hall for P.E. The teacher has invented a game. The children become animals, each guessing which animal his partner is. If

they guess wrong the animals have to go back and begin again - before the Flood comes. Afterwards the teacher says she wishes there were more Gaelic books - and Gaelic playlets written for children to perform. I think she does not need them.

3.2.4.5 Loneliness is a Gaelic Unit in Tain This is a tiny Unit - just three children when I visit. "One wee boy had to move away in the middle of term. I don't know how he got on, after starting off in Gaelic, poor wee soul" the Headteacher says. The teacher - just out of College - is delighted to have a visitor "just to show the children someone else in the wide world speaks Gaelic besides me". The children are up to the elbows in flour when I arrive. She keeps them very busy. For such a tiny class the walls are very full. The teacher speaks Gaelic all the time. The children speak English, but seem to understand Gaelic, as we finish the "baking" and play some games together. "Traffic lights" - to teach colours, and "stop" and "start" and "run". But when I help them to do their "maths" they use much more Gaelic: "I think it's because there's so much repetition in maths" the teacher says. One of the children is in P2, and has spent more than a year in an English-medium school: but he seems to have no trouble doing maths through Gaelic, after only a few months in the Unit. Later in the year the teacher "exchanges" with another teacher in Inverness once a week for a few months. This helps a lot - both teacher and children.

3.2.4.6 Lewis accents in Edinburgh There are now 13 children in the Ediburgh Gaelic Unit (P1 - 4). Their teacher, too, longs for visitors. "It's a close relationship with a small class. I think they get rather sick of me sometimes". But there are visitors and visitors. "We seem to be in a

gold-fish bowl here - people want to come and see what's going on - the Press and so on. That can be a strain. What I want is ordinary people who can speak Gaelic. Just to come in and do things with the children and talk Gaelic to them." They have found a Gaelic-speaking P.E. specialist, which has brought their Gaelic to life. On my second visit a new boy has just joined the Unit. His mother is a linguist and he is already bilingual, but this is his first week of Gaelic. He makes me read books with him - leaping on words and trying them out, returning to the ones which interest him most, guessing at new ones. He will not let me go - wants to finish all the books on the shelf, learn all the words. By the end of the first year the children are using Gaelic most of the time. Lewis Gaelic. Next year Lothian Region is starting an official Gaelic nursery class.

**3.2.4.7 Job-sharing, Bishopbriggs** This is a bright, modern school on the north side of Glasgow. The community has had a Gaelic play-group for some time - a model play-group, well-run and well-attended; the woman who organised it has moved into a job with CNSA, and from there to teach Gaelic in Hillpark Secondary School. But play-group parents decided not to send their children to Sir John Maxwell Gaelic Unit when it was established, but to lobby for a Unit in their own community. It was opened in 1988, with nine children (P1 - 3). An existent Gaelic-speaking member of staff taught the Unit children for the first two months, while Strathclyde advertised for a permanent teacher; when the new teacher arrived the Headteacher suggested they should "job-share" for the rest of the year: one took the Gaelic Unit every morning while the other taught P7 in the main school; in the afternoon they changed round. The Unit now has fourteen children and



the two teachers have a class each. When I visited (December and March) the children were speaking English almost exclusively, though appearing to comprehend quite a lot of Gaelic. By June a party from the Gaelic Department of Jordanhill Teacher Training College visited the Unit, and reported that a miracle had occurred: the children were speaking Gaelic.

3.2.4.8 Back to "the bilingual"? - Lewis Last year there were six P1 entrants to this school: four families requested that their children be educated through the medium of Gaelic only. A teacher was employed for the four, the other two went into the "ordinary bilingual" class. This year (1989 - 90) from six P1 entrants, two are in the Gaelic Unit, four have gone "bilingual". Next year four children are due to begin school, and "at the moment it looks as if none of them want to go into the Gaelic Unit. Mind you" says the Headteacher, "I could be wrong". When I visited the Unit (March 1989) the class teacher was busily and effectively equalising the varying Gaelic competence of its four children: two out of four were fluent Gaelic-speaking (one to all intents and purposes monolingual). They are using a pack of silly cards the day I call - an elephant with duck's feet; a man standing under an umbrella with rain falling out of it. They roll about laughing - falling over each other to tell me why the picture is silly - in Gaelic, of course. But do the children here really need a Gaelic Unit? Are parents of mainstream pupils opting against Gaelic-medium education, or affirming their belief in the efficacy of the Bilingual education scheme? The Headteacher is strongly supportive of Gaelic in the school - this is one of the few schools which has officially introduced Gaelic-medium teaching into its junior secondary department. "Surely everyone here is educated through the medium of Gaelic, Gaelic Unit or no?" I ask the

Headteacher. He is wary. I ask him if he thinks the Gaelic Unit children's linguistic progress differs from that of the rest. "Oh yes. Their Gaelic's much better. Mind you a lot of other the children have good Gaelic too..." Parents elected a School Board recently. The Gaelic Unit representative was not elected.

3.2.4.9 Giving up English for Lent, South Uist This is not so much a Gaelic Unit as an official acknowledgement of the community language. Everyone in P1 - 2 is in "the Gaelic"; after that they "go upstairs to the bilingual". The children "still play in Gaelic in the yard" in this school - the last of its kind, the local priest tells me. "That's why we fought against the closure of the small schools. They spoke Gaelic naturally in the small schools. Now they are all crowded into the big schools and they'll never speak Gaelic there - and then Comhairle nan Eilean will start Gaelic Units in those schools, and wonder why the children still aren't speaking Gaelic in the yard". It is Ash Wednesday when I visit. The priest tells the children they must give up something for Lent - something very very important and special - like sweeties, or pocket money. And they must promise not to speak a word of English all day. The teacher laughs wryly: this is the day the Art Teacher comes; the Art Teacher speaks no Gaelic.

3.2.4.10 Will they ever learn English? - Lewis This "Unit" was formed at the request of the parents of four little boys, the entire P1 intake for 1986. All four were monolingual Gaelic-speakers; all lived side by side, played together, went out on the hills together, worked together with their fathers on the croft, shared the same tractor. When they went to school at first, the Headteacher says, they "stood about in the play-ground together

looking lost. Then bit by bit the older children came over to them and started speaking Gaelic to them - mustering all the Gaelic they could to make them feel at home. I think it's been good for us all, having them here. We're all much more aware of our Gaelic I think". There are 25 children in the school this year, and the P1-2 class (seven children) is "Gaelic-medium", the rest of the school "bilingual" including the four original protagonists. When I visited last year the teacher asked me earnestly if I knew anything about teaching English: "we're a bit worried they'll never speak it". Three months later she reports that their English is coming along "just marvellously".

### 3.2.5 Conclusions

3.2.5.1 Certain themes emerge. The attitude of the Headteacher, for example: on the one hand lack of conviction - it may be shown in subtle ways, but is undermining for teachers already isolated from other Gaelic-medium colleagues: for example the English-speaking Head who "wonders how a poor little boy will get on when he moves house away from the Gaelic Unit"; or the Gaelic-speaking Head who can see "much to be said on both sides" for and against his own Gaelic Unit. On the other hand the English-speaking Headteacher who thinks imaginatively about the Gaelic "cuckoo" in her nest, creates two Gaelic-medium teachers for one post: to give each other support, "someone to talk Gaelic to, someone to bounce ideas off".

3.2.5.2 Teacher uncertainty: they feel unsure of their Gaelic, of their teaching ability, of the value of the resources they have made... Yet everywhere the standard of teaching is high, the language is already established in situations and functions for which they have never had to use Gaelic before.

3.2.5.3 A sense of isolation: a need for the children to hear adults other than the teacher using Gaelic - Gaelic-speaking visitors are welcomed like water-carriers in the desert in city Units, unlike anglophone press-men or academics, who come to look and go away. There is an obvious need for community involvement, yet this is more difficult to achieve in urban contexts - where it is most needed.

#### 3.2.5.4 Practical implications

3.2.5.4.1 Teacher training and supply      Specialist pre-service training seems essential. The supply of teachers (able and willing) is quite inadequate. This year (1989) new Gaelic Units were due to start in nine communities:

(a) Comhairle nan Eilean:-

Stornoway, Back (Lewis)

Iochdar and Carinish (S. and W. Uist));

(b) Highland Region:-

Newtonmore\*, Ullapool\*

Dunvegan\* (Skye)

(c) Strathclyde:-

Cornaigmore (Tiree)\*

Bowmore (Islay).

3.2.5.4.2 Of these, all marked \* have failed to open (October 1989) due, it appears, at least in part to lack of staff. Only those in Comhairle nan Eilean found teachers without apparent difficulty, by dint in some cases of juggling existent staff - not always, it seems, with the full commitment of the teacher. Many lack confidence - or motivation - to espouse an unfamiliar teaching-style, to use a language which they have not used across all situations, all curricular areas, before. The process compounds itself: where supply

is inadequate it is harder for teachers to attend INSET, or even to be ill with impunity.

3.2.5.4.3 Policy on optimum intake This seems to need rationalisation. It is ironic that in Comhairle nan Eilean, where most children come to school with some knowledge of Gaelic, the intake is confined strictly to P1, causing inter-familial dichotomies and keeping numbers in the Units so low as to be scarcely viable; while in Glasgow and Edinburgh the policy is more relaxed - in some instances perhaps, too relaxed.

3.2.5.4.4 Policy on Gaelic-medium v. "bilingual" teaching In Comhairle nan Eilean this becomes a question of staff-deployment and of attitudes towards non-Gaelic speakers. In Gwynedd (Wales - cf Appendix 4) there is a policy of universal Welsh-medium primary education - it is uncertain as yet what its long-term effects will be in terms of linguistic maintenance, attitudes towards the language etc. In some schools in Comhairle nan Eilean the element of choice is preserved for the non-Gaelic speaker by splitting infants into "Gaelic-medium" and "bilingual" classes, at the cost of having to employ (or deploy) a new staff member for every new Unit. The staff-pupil balance in the school as a whole is often a very fine one - thus in a two- or three-teacher school the establishment of a Gaelic Unit can be seen as a loss of pupils, and tip the balance against acquisition of another staff-member to the main school; more tactlessly still, the teacher may simply be taken out of the main stream and set to teach a tiny handful of children in the Gaelic Unit,

while class-numbers in the main stream rise. It seems no way to gain parental allies, let alone converts.

### 3.3 CHILDREN'S LINGUISTIC EXPERIENCE OUTWITH THE SCHOOL

*"Exeunt pretty nearly omnes" (MacColla, 1975: 31)*



### 3.3.1 INTRODUCTION AND GLOBAL FREQUENCIES

3.3.1.1 Methodology In March - April 1989 each Gaelic Unit was circulated with questionnaires, with the full cooperation of local authorities, Headteachers and staff. It was made clear that the object of the research was practical - to discover the linguistic background of pupils - and not in any way to invite parental assessment of or invidious comparison between individual Units: this approach seemed important in gaining the cooperation of teachers, and avoiding any sense of external threat or intrusion. In the event this proved highly satisfactory - teaching staff happily administered the questionnaires, one per family, and "chased up" returns, expressing desire for access to the eventual results of the survey. Their efforts were of incalculable assistance in ensuring that information was made available for most children in all schools, as discussed below, and results will be made available to all relevant staff on completion of this thesis. (Exemplum of questionnaire and copies of relevant correspondence are contained in Appendix 1: these will be seen to be self-explanatory). All data contained in returned questionnaires have been professionally collated at Strathclyde University Department of Information Technology - to whom thanks are due - and analysed to establish their statistical significance in terms of trends and associations. In addition to the basic *chi squared* test a variety of other test procedures was applied to verify specific results (including Yates Correction where numbers were low). Haber and Runyon (1973) and Siegel (1956) were consulted by the present (congenitally innumerate) researcher to assist with interpretation of the resultant findings.

3.3.1.2 **Remit** The remit of this investigation was to discover the extent to which children in Gaelic primary units in Scotland rely upon the school for their language input. Teachers' comments, case studies etc give the impression that - especially in urban situations - the school is often the *only* consistent source of such input, either because parents themselves are not Gaelic-speaking or because they have devolved to the school the prime responsibility for language maintenance. This is perhaps more understandable when one considers the pressures imposed by a massively English-dominant society, the media, employment patterns etc. The case-studies contained in 3.4, below, give some insight into the difficulties encountered by ordinary parents, even where both partners are bilingual, in overcoming communal and societal pressure and even, sometimes, prejudice. However it has important implications for staff and parents alike, in terms both of their expectations of individual children and of the educational programmes in which they are involved. Thus one urban teacher pointed out that she "has to start each term with conscious language work, to get the children back to where they were before the holidays". It may be that, in future, parents will have to acknowledge the importance of their own rôle to a greater extent, in terms of consciously seeking out extramural language opportunities for their children and, where relevant, learning and speaking Gaelic with their children. Some are already doing so (cf Case-study 12, in section 3.4, below, where parents have taken pains to find a Gaelic-speaking mother's help). An encouraging proportion of adult female respondents describe themselves as "learning Gaelic" - 22% of all maternal respondents (3.3.1.7, below) but only 8% of fathers are similarly described: one case-study (no. 11, section 3.4, below) highlights the

practical problems implicit in both parents simultaneously attending Gaelic classes.

3.3.1.3 Number of schools containing Gaelic Units in March 1989: 12. Five of these (in Inverness, Tain, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Bishopbriggs) are classified in the analysis that follows as "urban"; seven (two in Lewis, four in Skye and one in S. Uist) are classified "Gàidhealtachd". The latter term is based, for convenience, on the Gaelic population density in the respective surrounding catchments (50%+ according to the 1981 Census - cf Withers, 1984, 234) although an element of inconsistency inevitably attends upon such generalised terms: thus Portree (pop. 1,533) appears as "Gàidhealtachd", due to the overall Gaelic population density of the Island of Skye, while Tain (pop. 3,470: General Registry Office for Scotland, 1981) appears as "urban", being situated in Easter Ross, from which Gaelic has largely disappeared (cf Dorian, 1981, for description of language death in similar neighbouring communities in East Sutherland).

3.3.1.4 Total number of questionnaires returned: 133. This represents 133 families, each with one or more children attending a Gaelic Unit within a Scottish primary school. Segments of the data were also analysed for other children in these families (older and younger siblings).

3.3.1.5 Number of children in Gaelic Units (GU children) in sample: 164

This may be seen as a highly representative sample (ROR = 91%), as is confirmed by Fig. 1, below, showing Gaelic Unit populations at time this investigation was carried out (April 1989).

3.3.1.5.1 FIGURE 1: Gaelic Unit rolls, April, 1989

URBAN		GAIDHEALTACHD	
School	GU Roll		GU Roll
Sir John Maxwell (Glasgow)	68		
Central (Inverness)	23	Portree (Skye)	18
		Breasclete (Lewis)	13
		Stoneybridge (S. Uist)	9
		Sleat (Skye)	13
Meadowburn (Bishopbriggs)	9	Broadford (Skye)	6
Tollcross (Edinburgh)	7	Staffin (Skye)	6
Craighill (Tain)	5	Siabost (Lewis)	4
<b>TOTAL in GU's</b>	<b>112</b>		<b>69</b>
<b>(Overall Total: 181)</b>			

3.3.1.6 Overall number of children in sample: 316. This includes all children, aged from 3 months to 18, present in all 133 families. Of these, a proportion comprises elder siblings in age-ranges which disqualified them for entry into Gaelic Units (cut-off point varies from place to place, according to initial date of commencement of the Unit and local school policy on midstream entry). GU children comprise 61% of the total sample, while 90 (28% of total sample) were of pre-school age at the time the investigation was carried out; their presence further indicates how the roll of these units may increase in the next five years, even if no other

factors pertain (e.g. cumulative publicity and goodwill; proven educational credibility; availability of professionally run pre-school Gaelic nursery classes as in Inverness, 3.2.3, above etc).

3.3.1.7 Total number of "Gaelic-speaking children" in sample: 89 (28%).

Measures of linguistic competence are here based entirely on subjective parental estimation. Obviously a range of non-measurable variations is reflected, especially as between Gaelic-speaking and non-Gaelic speaking parental groups (the latter by definition less able objectively to judge linguistic competence across a variety of situations and registers). Thus the reality behind this response may fall at any point along a scale from *"native-born Gaelic speaking child able to communicate freely across the range of childhood experience"* to *"we are so proud of our child who has no Gaelic background but whose teacher tells us he is making great progress"* (cf MacKinnon 1985: 10 for similar discussion in relation to the interpretation of Census returns). Thus it cannot be viewed in isolation as an accurate reflection of children's Gaelic competence. On further analysis, however, (3.3.2.23, below) some highly significant associations emerge which, despite the remit of the present survey as stated in the letter of introduction to local authorities (3.3.1.2, above), invite interpretation as variations in parental assessment of the potency of specific Gaelic Units in altering their children's observable linguistic behaviour thus far.

3.3.1.8 Linguistic/cultural background of children The table that follows (Fig. 2) clearly illustrates the extent to which the school is a, if not the, major source of linguistic input for the majority of pupils. It also

highlights the interest presently being shown in Gaelic education by Scots parents with no recognised "Gaelic" antecedence. Thus, among the present sample, for every father described as "fluent Gaelic-speaking" there is another described as having no "Gaelic background" at all; virtually the same pattern emerges on the distaff side. Admittedly this does not take account of parents who professed themselves able to speak "some" or "a little" Gaelic (25%), nor those recorded as "learning" the language (32%). However, this may not amount to much in terms of sustained, regular language input for the children concerned: many learners and linguistically limited speakers seem to be inhibited from applying their learned skills through general lack of self-confidence (Montgomery, 1989) even in mixed marriage situations between native-speaker and learner (Case Study 2, below): hopefully increasing awareness among native speakers may render the situation less stressful in future, while recognition of the children's linguistic needs may cause parents to persevere in their efforts.

#### 3.3.1.8.1 FIGURE 2 Linguistic/cultural background of GU pupils

**% Parents describing themselves as having "a Gaelic background": 59%**

Father	Mother
79 (59%)	79 (59%)

**% Parents describing themselves as "fluent Gaelic-speakers": 42%**

Father	Mother
54 (41%)	57 (43%)

3.3.1.9 Occupational status of mothers This may seem to be of relevance in estimating mothers' ability to contribute to language maintenance, especially among pre-school children. By effectively reducing the amount of time spent by mothers with their young children, maternal employment outside the home may effectively militate against the children's attendance of Gaelic play-groups (which are part-time, and require direct parental - within Gaelic communities, almost always maternal - involvement) and, conversely, increase the tendency towards attendance of full-time, professionally run nursery education programmes - in all instances outwith Highland Region, English-medium. Although the overall proportion of working mothers in the present sample is not unduly noteworthy in the light of modern trends the percentage increases significantly among urban-dwelling mothers (the association was found to be just significant at  $p > 0.02$ , trend at  $p > 0.01$ ) as is illustrated in Fig. 3, below.

3.3.1.9.1 FIGURE 3: occupational status of mothers (where known)

Status	Overall % (% of total)	Rural (% of sub-grp)	Urban (% of sub-grp)
Housewife:	60 (48%)	30 (59%)	30 (38%)
Works part-time:	42 (32%)	15 (29%)	27 (35%)
Works full-time:	27 (20%)	6 (12%)	21 (27%)

3.3.1.10 Such findings may indicate the need for official, professionally run pre-school Gaelic education in urban areas, and should be recalled when interpreting findings relating to children's attendance of English-medium nursery classes (3.3.1.22, below).

3.3.1.11 Proportion of one-parent families: 9%. Although the percentage is not high, this is a situation which may disproportionately affect children's linguistic exposure. It may alter the overall breadth of family communication, increase the time spent in the care of adults other than the parent. (On the one hand this may be a Gaelic-speaking grandmother; on the other it may be an English-medium nursery school or monolingual child-minder). A few instances have been observed where marital break-down (temporary and permanent) has radically altered existent linguistic balance within the home: i.e. children's loss of sustained contact with a Gaelic-speaking parent, and, perhaps, prime motivational force behind the children's attendance at the Gaelic Unit. It should be noted that of the 12 recorded single-parent families 11 live in urban areas. Although these figures are too small for reliable extrapolation an association was found with significance at the level  $p > 0.05$  (still just significant after Yates Correction).

3.3.1.12 Extent of Gaelic linguistic input within the domestic domain Significant associations were discovered between (a) fluent Gaelic-speaking parents and related positive indices, and (b) children attending Gàidhealtachd (as opposed to urban) schools. These will be fully discussed at 3.3.2ff (below). At this point it seems relevant to record some of the



global frequencies, which suggest an overall low level of language input outwith the educational domain, and consequent onus upon teaching staff and other agencies (youth and community organisations, for example) in addressing the imbalance: in fact, as will be seen below (Fig 18, 3.3.2.15.1), the only context in which significantly higher percentages of urban children seem to receive Gaelic input, apart from passive viewing of all-too-infrequent television programmes, is on holiday and/or visiting relatives. Thus extra-curricular Gaelic exposure would seem vital - e.g. regular exchanges between urban and Gàidhealtachd schools, as initiated in Sir John Maxwell Primary School (summer terms, 1988, 1989) leisure clubs and summer youth activity camps such as those run by Comunn na Gàidhlig (especially relevant in light of the low incidence of habitual Gaelic usage between peers indicated in Fig. 18, op cit). Welsh experience suggests that heartland residential centres - both for school staff and pupils, (as discussed in Appendix 3) and for Gaelic-learner families, may also be expedient developments in the future.

3.3.1.13 From Fig. 4 (below) it will be seen that only 27% of children live in households where Gaelic is spoken by both parents, 41% in homes where no adult Gaelic speaker is present. The situation is slightly better as regards Gaelic literacy: only 34% of children have no adult able to help, to some degree, with Gaelic home-work and general literacy skills.

3.3.1.13.1 FIGURE 4: Gaelic-speaking & read/write adults in home

No. of fluent Gaelic-speaking adult(s)	No. in sample	% of total
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No speakers:	54	(41%)
One:	43	(32%)
Two or more:	36	(27%)

No. of read/write Gaelic adult(s)	No. in sample	% of total
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None:	45	(34%)
One:	50	(38%)
Two or more:	38	(29%)

3.3.1.14 In Fig. 5 (below) the emergent picture is one of an overall predominance of English usage in homes: the number of households where Gaelic is spoken by two or more adults (Fig. 4, above) exceeds by 11% that of homes where Gaelic is spoken "all the time" (Fig.5, below) while the percentage of homes where Gaelic is "never" used (ibid) exceeds that of homes where no parent speaks the language (Fig. 4, above). In between these polarities is a proportion (40%) of homes where Gaelic is "sometimes" or "often" spoken, roughly equivalating with the percentage of families with one Gaelic-speaking parent (38%).

3.3.1.14.1 FIGURE 5: patterns of Gaelic usage within the home

	Adults speak Gaelic together in home	Mothers speak Gaelic to children	Other adults speak Gaelic to children	Chn reply to adults in Gaelic	Chn address adults in Gaelic	Chn speak together in Gaelic
Never;	52 (39%)	28 (21%)	13 (10%)	10 (8%)	21 (16%)	40 (30%)
Sometimes;	34 (26%)	45 (34%)	59 (44%)	67 (50%)	68 (51%)	62 (47%)
Often;	18 (14%)	31 (23%)	35 (26%)	30 (23%)	21 (16%)	8 (6%)
All the time;	24 (18%)	27 (20%)	24 (18%)	26 (20%)	21 (16%)	16 (12%)
Not Known;	5 (4%)	2 (2%)	2 (2%)		2 (2%)	6 (5%)

3.3.1.15 From Fig. 5 (above) it will be seen that the overall proportion of Gaelic-speaking mothers (43% - cf Fig. 2, above) corresponds with the percentage of those who profess to use the language "often" or "all the time" with their children. In the light of linguistic research, however, the situation would seem more healthy if a higher proportion of such mothers had responded "all the time": McLaughlin (1978: 94) points to studies (e.g. Ronjat, 1913; Pavlovitch, 1920; Leopold, 1939 - 49) which suggest that the optimal conditions for simultaneous bilingual acquisition occur where "the domains of use are clearly defined and if the two languages are maintained somewhat in balance"; conversely the greatest amount of interference between languages seems to occur "when adults in the child's environment mix the languages in their own speech" (Burling, 1959; Tabouret-Keller, 1962, cited McLaughlin, op cit). The proportion of children who "never" hear other adults speaking Gaelic within the home domain is small, though again it may be questionable whether "sometimes"

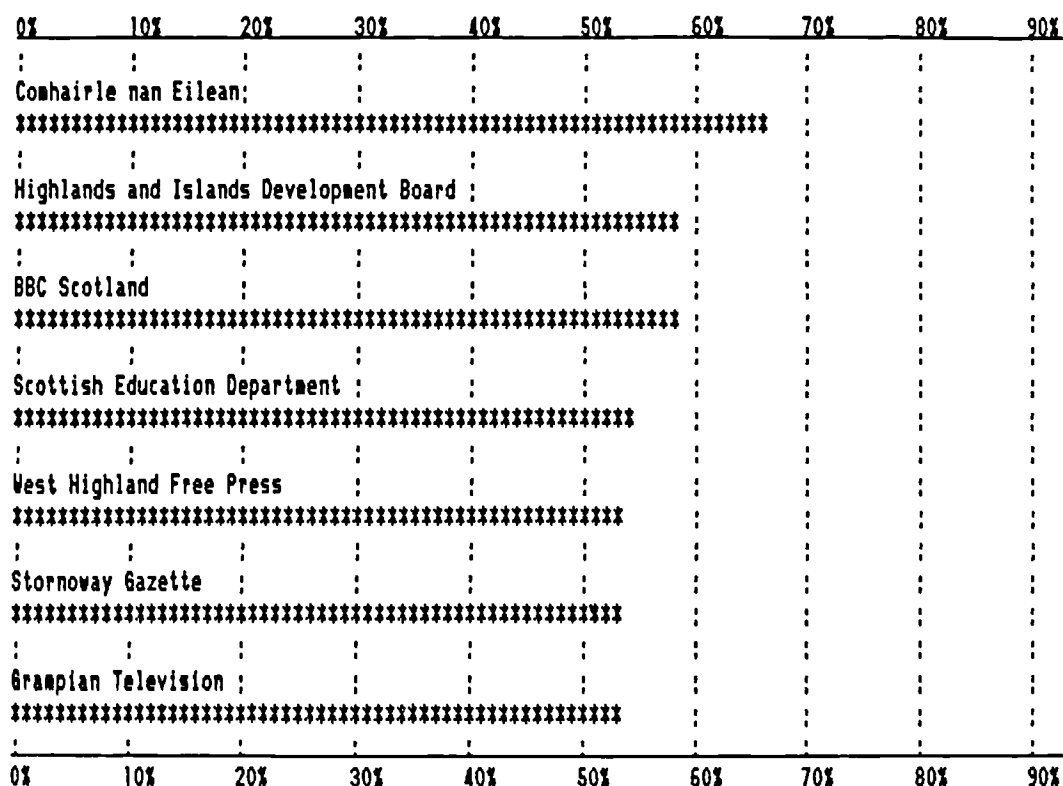
hearing Gaelic in this way in fact provides much in the way of sustained input: thus one might more pessimistically interpret these results in terms of the majority of children who do not regularly have Gaelic input from their mother (65%) or any other adult (55%) within the home (fig. 5, above).

3.3.1.16 The children's own Gaelic usage, as assessed by their parents, seems in many instances to be confined to communicating with adults. Thus while only 10% "never" reply in Gaelic when addressed by adults, and 16% "never" speak Gaelic voluntarily to adults, the percentage of children "never" using the language with siblings is estimated to be considerably higher - 30% (ibid). Again this underlines the importance of external Gaelic recreational activities, such as *Sradagan* and *Cearcall* youth clubs organised by Comunn na Gàidhlig (cf 3.1, above) which effectively carry on the work of the Gaelic play-groups in attempting to associate Gaelic with informal "fun" aspects of life (Scannell, 1985:21) and to encourage the use of Gaelic among peers. This underlay one of the most trenchant of the arguments mustered by parents in opposition to the recent (1987 - 88) closure of small schools in the Western Isles, especially the Uists and Barra, where, it was claimed, *"children still played in Gaelic in the yard - something they won't do in your brave new Gaelic Unit in Iochdar School"* (comment by local priest at an open CNAG meeting, Benbecula, May 11th, 1989) cf also 3.2.4.9, above.

3.3.1.17 The media and books These can provide not only a source of linguistic input but also endorsement of the validity of Gaelic, enhancing the self-image of its speakers. An attitudinal study conducted in conjunction with the present research indicated (Fraser, 1988: 70ff) the importance with which Gaelic-speakers tend to invest radio, television and publishing in terms of language maintenance, as the following extracts illustrate: (for full discussion of this survey, cf Section 4, below)

3.3.1.17.1 FIGURE 5 The perceived importance of the media

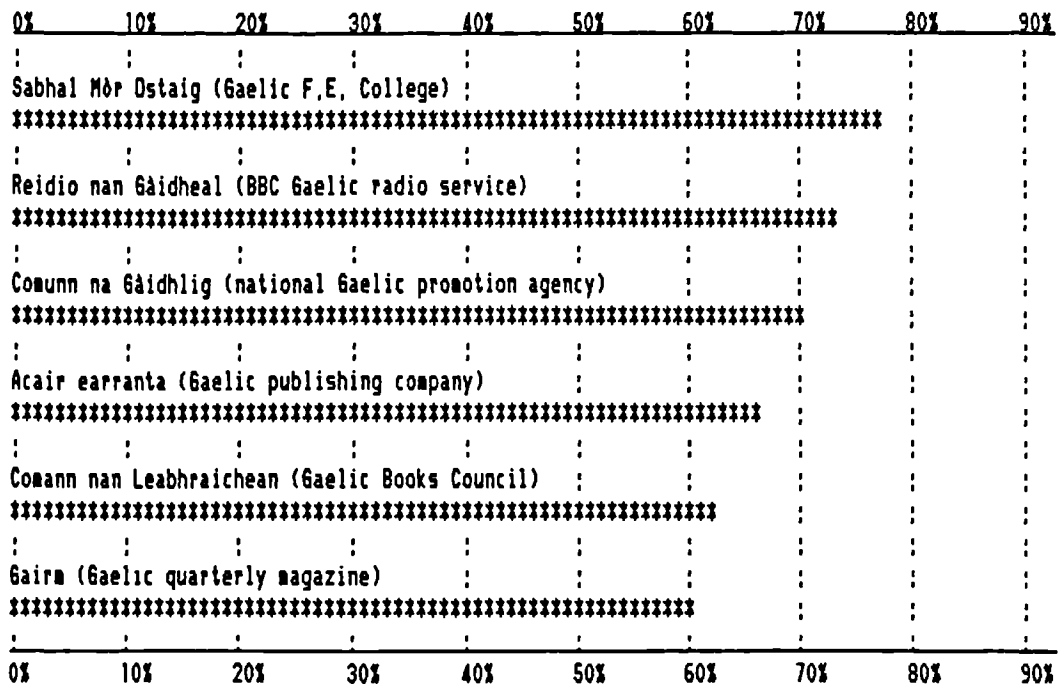
These agencies, with a partial Gaelic remit, were rated "extremely important" or "important" by the following percentages of respondents:



(Source: Fraser, op cit).

### 3.3.1.17.2 FIGURE 6: Perceived importance of the media and publishing

These agencies, with a wholly Gaelic remit, were rated "extremely important" or "important" by the following percentages of respondents:



(Source: Fraser, op cit).

3.3.1.18 The present investigation indicates a high level of adult loyalty to current limited Gaelic broadcasting output (Fig. 7, below): 63% of the sample watch "most" or "all" Gaelic television programmes (despite (a) BBC policy of late in concentrating its limited Gaelic production budget upon children's and youth-interest output and (b) the tendency for Grampian TV's Gaelic programmes to be transmitted at unsocial hours, especially in the central belt, where the Scottish Television company has responsibility for scheduling). As regards radio 69% of adults listen to

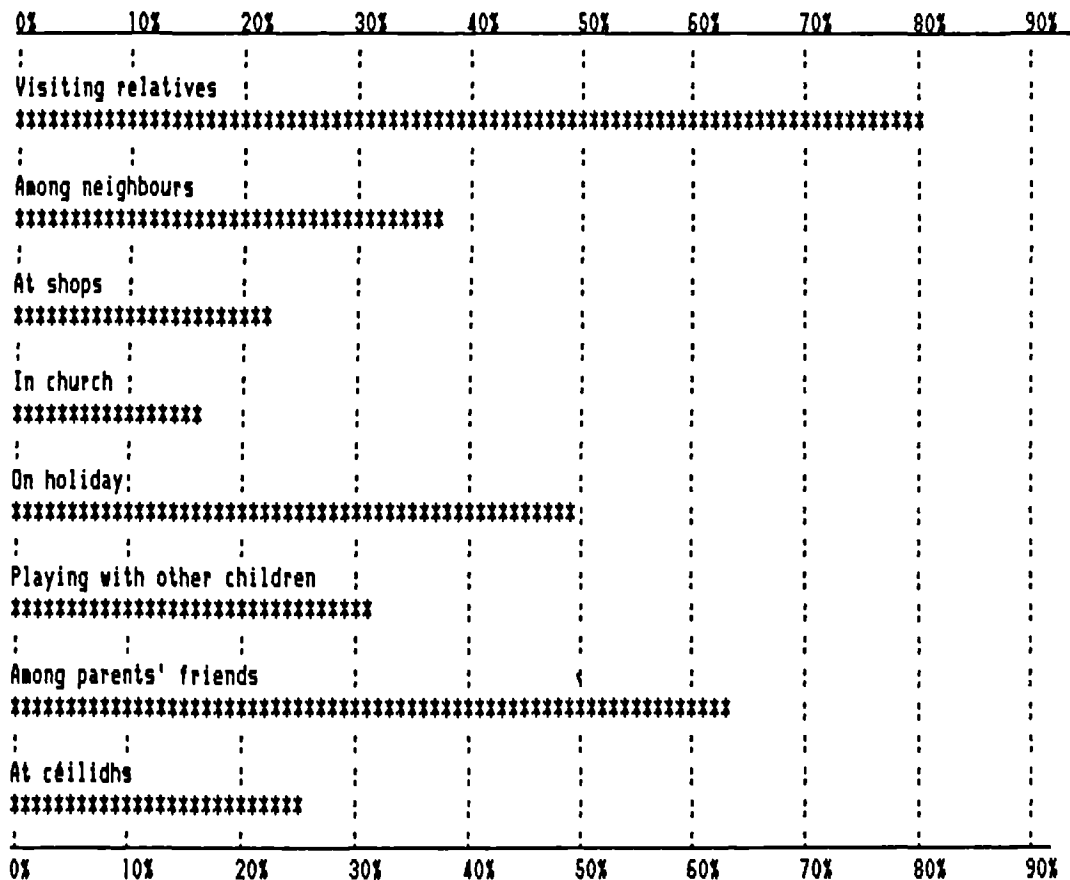
"some" or "most" Gaelic programmes, though it is difficult to estimate what this means in real terms, owing to variations in output: thus nationally-available output is supplemented to a considerable extent by local transmission in both the Highland and Western Isles fields. However it seems clear that the majority of children in this sample are unlikely to listen to many, if any, of the available Gaelic radio programmes, though the majority seem to take advantage of such television programmes as are available in after-school hours (and/or, perhaps, watch in school or on video). Taking into account Krashen's emphasis on the paramount importance of "comprehensible input" (e.g. Krashen and Terrell, 1983, 58), general-interest radio programmes are likely to be of less value to language limited speakers (child or adult) than television, where visual cues assist comprehension. Yet the content of Gaelic children's television programmes has generally been aimed at the pre-school age-group, in support of the efforts of the Gaelic play-group movement, while youth involvement in radio programming has revolved around older teenagers, through the *Guth na h-Oige* Trust (q.v., 3.1, above). Perhaps there may be a case for targeting primary school-age children, such as represented in the present sample, in terms of regular radio programming of a type relevant in terms both of content and style - better still, television programmes. Gaelic books seem available to most children but, again, to date new publications have tended to be targeted towards the pre-school child. This is a problem of which educationists and publishers are well aware, and are attempting to address within limited budgets. Indeed all the above comments are echoed by a parent (Case Study 7, below) who worries about his daughter's interest in Gaelic being maintained as she becomes more aware of Anglo-American youth culture and wide-ranging English reading-material.

### 3.3.1.18.1 FIGURE 7: patterns of Gaelic TV/radio consumption

	Gaelic radio; adults listen	Gaelic radio; chn, listen	Gaelic TV; adults watch	Gaelic TV; chn, watch	Gaelic chn's books in home
None	25 (19%)	53 (40%)	10 (8%)	6 (5%)	12 (9%)
Some	56 (42%)	62 (47%)	40 (30%)	58 (44%)	95 (71%)
Most	36 (27%)	13 (10%)	45 (34%)	40 (30%)	26 (20%)*
All	15 (11%)	3 (2%)	38 (29%)	29 (22%)	(* = "most or all")
N/K	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	

3.3.1.19 Other non-school contexts Again the majority of children seem to have relatively few opportunities regularly to hear and use Gaelic in contexts other than educational (Fig. 8 below), apart from "visiting relatives" (81%), "among parents' friends" (64%) and "on holiday" (50%).

### 3.3.1.19.1 FIGURE 8: Gaelic usage in other non-school contexts





3.3.1.20 The Gaelic play-group Emergent from Fig. 8, above, are strong indications as to how important a potential source of linguistic input *may* exist in the identifiable social network of Gaelic-speaking friends and relatives, whether within the home or on holiday. Urban society is entirely English-dominated; however the use of Gaelic in Gàidhealtachd communities (among neighbours, "at shops" and in church) is by no means consistently high, while less than 50% of the Gàidhealtachd sample plays with other children via Gaelic, according to subjective parental assessment (as fully discussed in 3.3.2.15, below).

3.3.1.21 Within this context the importance of the Gaelic play-group becomes self-evident. It provides a context not only for language maintenance and/or second language acquisition, but also for the reinforcement of, and provision of mutual support among, existent social networks, and the formation of new networks.

3.3.1.22 This seems especially relevant in urban situations where Gaelic-speaking parents, or those interested in Gaelic, are widely scattered demographically. There have been enormous changes in Gaelic community life in Glasgow over the researcher's adult life-time: on the one hand a reduction of clearly identifiable "communities", permanent - residential and geographically-zoned - and sporadic (largely social) - revolving around Highland societies, worship, leisure pursuits (music, sport, the arts) and charity involvement. Upwardly-mobile Gaelic speakers have moved to the suburbs (largely through the good offices of a well-known Gaelic-speaking real estate partnership). Social venues have disappeared or lost

their association with the culture, leaving public-houses as one of the few identifiable (but for obvious reasons limited-application) meeting-points. On the other hand new groupings are emerging, in response to new patterns of life, and of these the Gaelic play-group movement, with its ongoing requirement to run fund-raising social events, is an important element, in addition to its overt work in providing pre-school Gaelic exposure.

3.3.1.23 Of 164 GU children in the present sample, 84 (51%) had Gaelic-medium pre-school educational experience. This may not provide a very reliable measure for estimating future trends, owing to the proportion of children in the present sample who were already attending primary school by the time a *cròileagan* was established in their community: this varies from community to community, but, for example, Glasgow children aged 10+ are known to fall into this category. We may fairly confidently predict that the proportion of GU children who have already attended Gaelic play-groups will rise (a) as a result of CHSA development (and, hopefully, increased local authority provision) and (b) as parents become aware of the value of continuous linguistic experience. Thus there is a two-way process involved: Gaelic pre-school education introduces parents to the concept of Gaelic-medium education and increases the likelihood of its continuation into the primary; the existence of Gaelic-medium primary Units gives motivation for parents to begin the process at an earlier stage in the child's development.

3.3.1.24 However, as will be fully discussed below (3.3.2.16ff), worrying thorns are discernible in this rosy picture. In the cities, where a higher proportion of mothers work outwith the home and general social pressures

are greater, there is a significant tendency for children to attend professionally-run pre-school English-medium nursery schools, often in addition to the Gaelic play-group. Such nursery schools tend to be free, custom built, systematically organised, well resourced, and offer in the main five sessions per week of "freedom" for busy and/or working mothers; voluntarily run Gaelic play-groups tend to meet less frequently, sometimes in adhoc and ill-resourced surroundings, and involve mothers in ongoing administrative and organisational duties - and paying for the privilege. By this process the positive linguistic and cultural associations formed in the morning may be virtually nullified by those on offer in the afternoon (or vice versa).

**3.3.1.25 Summary** The next section deals in detail with significant divergences between the urban and the Gàidhealtachd samples and attempts to draw some conclusions from them. In the meantime the most striking feature of the above data is the limited linguistic opportunity for the majority of GU children outside the classroom walls. This seems to have important implications:

**3.3.1.25.1** for educational policy-makers, in ensuring that predominance is given to the minority language at all stages within the school in order to outweigh the existent imbalance; in providing reception classes (pre-school nursery classes, reception language classes and/or language support staff, especially where enrolment is condoned at later stages in primary education); and in attempting to identify other, extra-curricular support mechanisms (residential centres, exchange visits etc) to create a multi-dimensional linguistic

experience for children who may otherwise grow up associating Gaelic with the school classroom and the class teacher alone

3.3.1.25.2 for teachers, in terms of awareness of their own rôle as the primary (or only) sources of developmental linguistic and cultural input for many children at all stages of the school; in terms of their expectations of and approach towards individual children, even those from apparently bilingual homes - many of whom appear from the present study to be hearing and using less Gaelic outwith school than might reasonably be assumed; in terms of attempting to involve members of the community in school activities, in order to allay children's tenacious unconscious associations

3.3.1.25.3 for parents, in terms of recognition that their commitment to Gaelic-medium education cannot be a purely passive one if it is to succeed in creating functional bilingual citizens, motivated and competent to use both languages across the range of human affairs in adult life.

3.3.1.26 As regards parental motivation it may be seen as a defect of the study that information was not sought as to the educational and/or professional and/or socio-economic status of parents. Such information would certainly be useful in terms of predicting the degree of continuing support Gaelic Unit pupils may derive outwith the school. However it was felt that any form of standard questioning designed to elicit such information might be perceived as intrusive, and therefore, at this stage,

should be avoided at all costs in circumstances where (a) the researcher is in continuing close contact with many of the respondents and where (b) local authorities had made it clear that a relatively undemanding formula and well-defined remit were required if questionnaires were to be administered through the school system. However Case Studies presented below (section 3.4) - while not purporting to reflect proportionally the socio-economic spread of the GU parent population - have been deliberately selected in such a way as to illustrate both the overall breadth of the spread and also many of the actual problems (and, conversely, advantages) which derive directly from the personal and/or professional *modus vivendi* of parents. Such details, recounted freely by subjects in interview, provide much data from which future research may perhaps extrapolate some of "the realities of children as communicating beings" (Hymes, op cit: 2.5.37.1, above) and the rôle which "socio-cultural factors" (ibid) and parental attitudes may play in their linguistic development.

ADDENDUM In reading the following section it should be recalled that the linguistic policy in operation within Sir John Maxwell Gaelic Unit is in the process of alteration at the time of writing (cf p 181, above). As with all Gaelic initiatives, situations may alter quite radically within a relatively short space of time. The appointment of a non-teaching Assistant Headteacher to oversee developments within the Gaelic Unit would seem a substantial demonstration of support by Strathclyde - and the Region is at present advertising the post of Gaelic Curriculum Development Officer, whose aegis will include ongoing developmental work across the whole Region, including Glasgow. Perhaps this appointment may in turn give rise to a Regional Policy for Gaelic Education, as has been established within Highland Region and Comhairle nan Eilean: to date Strathclyde has treated its Gaelic Units as any other primary schools within the Region - leaving linguistic and curricular policy to be determined internally by the Headteacher and staff, with assistance, if required, from the Primary Adviser. In circumstances where neither Headteacher nor Adviser are Gaelic-speaking or linguistic specialists this cannot but place an untenable burden upon such personnel.

### 3.3.2 COMPARISON BETWEEN URBAN AND GAIDHEALTACHD SAMPLES

3.3.2.1 Introduction Much has been written about the typology of bilingual education. Mackey (1970) suggests 90 usefully identifiable models, of which, according to MacKinnon (1977: 10), six were in use at the time in Wales and two as regards Scottish Gaelic - (a) transitional employment of mother-tongue teaching as a bridge to English-medium education, followed at secondary level by (b) discrete subject teaching of Gaelic as an academic study. Since the 1950's, but especially since the inception of the Western Isles Bilingual Education Project, Gaelic-medium education has become gradually more accepted as a stable model, viable and valuable *per se*, for native Gaelic speaking children across gradually widening areas of the primary school curriculum. However, another type of language need was always to some extent present in many island schools, but is now becoming more apparent - as presented by the growing numbers of children who enter school with English as their dominant, or sometimes only language. It has been suggested, as already discussed (3.1, above), that the needs of such children were from the outset less than adequately addressed by the Bilingual Project in terms of consistent policy and practice. In the long-term one might liken this to a built-in structural fault which may not be obvious during the early stages of cumulative low-level stress. In the short-term it seems to have resulted in pragmatic code-switching by some teachers - so that the bilingual model reflected, rather than attempted to compensate for, changes in the linguistic balance in the community as a whole. Thus several of Mackey's 90 varieties (op cit) might be present in one classroom or even group exercise. The inevitable result would seem to be dilution of language, uncertainty of aims.

3.3.2.3 Recognition by some Western Isles parents of the potential outcomes of such practice (both for their own individual children and for the Gaelic language) seems to have lain behind their demand for official, full-time Gaelic-medium education at least throughout the infant stages, with the gradual introduction of English reading thereafter within a still predominantly Gaelic-medium frame-work: the classes thus formed (in Lewis and S. Uist) have catered almost entirely for native Gaelic-speaking children. Non-Gaelic speaking children are rare exceptions which prove the rule, and have "just had to manage" as one teacher put it, adding that the pupil in question was "coming on really miraculously" in Gaelic (presumably in much the same way as previous generations of Gaelic-speaking infants "came on" in English-medium classes, though almost certainly with less sympathy, encouragement and kindly attention from their teachers). This model, therefore, is "mother tongue maintenance" with "benevolent submersion" for L2 learners (Stuttnab-Kangas, 1988: 23).

3.3.2.4 Thus among 18 Western Isles families included in the present sample, 17 mothers and 15 fathers are fluent Gaelic speakers. No homes are recorded as having "no adult Gaelic speaker", only two where Gaelic is "never" spoken between adults - as opposed to four "often" and 11 "all the time"; only three instances occur of homes adjudged to contain "no fluent Gaelic-speaking children"; in 14 homes the mother speaks Gaelic "all the time" to her children, in only one instance "never"; in 15 homes children reply to adults in Gaelic "all the time", in 13 instances they habitually address adults in Gaelic. In 12 households children speak to one another in Gaelic "all the time", three "often" and one "sometimes". The majority of these children use Gaelic when visiting relatives (17), among neighbours



and parents' friends (16), at the shops and in church (15) and playing with other children (14). On the other hand only eight, understandably, use Gaelic when on holiday. It is the reverse side of the urban coin.

3.3.2.5 In Skye, however, language erosion began sooner and has become more obvious in many communities. Parental demand, therefore, was for Gaelic "immersion" of a more instrumental nature - in some instances to maintain and reinforce established pre-school linguistic habits against wider and more generally adverse societal pressures, in others to provide a context for continued second-language acquisition as begun in the Gaelic play-group. Thus in 10 out of 34 Skye households there are no fluent adult Gaelic speakers, so adults "never" speak Gaelic together, and in only seven does the mother speak Gaelic "all the time" with her children. The unpromising "sometimes" category appears regularly, in terms of maternal Gaelic usage (10), other adults using Gaelic with children (13), children replying to and addressing adults in Gaelic (16 and 17 respectively). In only four homes do children use Gaelic together "all the time", 20 "sometimes" and 10 "never". Parents' friends and local neighbours provide extra Gaelic input (in 25 and 24 instances respectively) but only 14 respondents consider their children likely to hear Gaelic "at the shops", while "at church" elicited only three positive responses from among the Skye sample.

3.3.2.6 Thus it may seem invalid to combine results from two such widely differing situations, for comparison with a so-called "urban" sample, itself not without anomalies, as pointed out above (3.3.1.2). In defence of the strategy, however, several factors seem relevant. Staffin School, for

example - in the remote "north end" of Skye - appears, both from its largely crofting environs and on the evidence of the present data, to be more comparable with the Western Isles than with Portree, Broadford or Sleat. Again, the very fact that parents in Lewis felt moved effectively to "opt out" of the established bilingual system indicates that these communities may nowadays have more in common with Skye than meets the eye - as does the care with which the Headteacher of a Lewis school looked round her P6/7 class to "find you a good Gaelic speaker to take you across to the Gaelic Unit", or her description of how the older pupils "muster all the Gaelic they can" to speak to the Gaelic Unit infants in the play-ground. MacKinnon (1977, op cit) shows only too clearly the speed with which linguistic patterns can alter, especially in an urbanised situation (Tarbert, Harris, in that instance) and more specifically on housing estates within such towns. However, to base the comparison on "urban" v. "rural" communities in a stricter sense would throw up its own anomalies, combine equally disparate entities - e.g. on the one hand (a) Portree and Broadford with (b) Glasgow and Edinburgh; on the other, (a) Sleat, in the rural but fairly anglicised "south end" of Skye with (b) Stoneybridge in the Gaelic-speaking "middle district" of South Uist. In future, following the recent establishment of Gaelic Units within much larger schools in Stornoway (Lewis), Iochdar (S. Uist), and Bowmore (Islay), there will be scope and a numerical base for more finely-honed research and analysis: in the meantime the above remarks may hopefully serve as a *caveat emptor* rather than an abrogation of what follows.

3.3.2.7 Number of families represented in sample Fig. 9 (below) shows the spread of response between the twelve Gaelic Units in existence in

April 1989, while Fig. 10 shows, for comparison, the year in which each Unit was established and the number of primary stages over which the scheme now extends (dependent upon regional policy regarding (a) initial intake and (b) duration of scheme.)

### 3.3.2.7.1 FIGURE 9: number of families in sample, per school

GAIDHEALTACHD		URBAN	
School	No. of families	School	No. of families
Breasclete	9	Central (Inverness)	22
Broadford	5	Craighill (Tain)	1
Portree	14	Meadowburn (Bishopbriggs)	6
Siabost	3	Sir John Maxwell (Glasgow)	48
Sleat	9	Tollcross (Edinburgh)	4
Staffin	6		
Stoneybridge (S. Uist)	6		
TOTAL	52	TOTAL	81
% of total sample	39%	% of total sample	61%

### 3.3.2.7.2 FIGURE 10: GU's: date established; no. of classes, 1988-89

GAIDHEALTACHD			URBAN		
School	Date est.	Classes	School	Date est.	Classes
Breasclete	1986	P1-3	Central	1985	P1-4
Portree	1986	P1-4	Sir John Maxwell	1985	P1-7
Broadford	1987	P1-3	Meadowburn	1988	P1-3
Sleat	1987	P1-3	Tollcross	1988	P1-3
Stoneybridge	1987	P1-2	Craighill	1988	P1-2
Staffin	1988	P1			
Siabost	1988	P1			

3.3.2.8 Number of children at each primary stage Fig. 11, below, again reflects regional policy on initial and midstream intake. At one end of the continuum is Comhairle nan Eilean, who have ruled that Gaelic-medium Units will be confined to an initial P1 intake, however small: at P3 children are generally reunited with their peers in the "bilingual" stream. P1 intake,

though providing the most secure frame-work for development, has caused heart-ache among several known Island parents of equally competent children close in age - the younger of whom may enrol in a newly established Gaelic-medium P1 class, while the elder remains among his peers in the mainstream "bilingual" P2. At the other extreme is Sir John Maxwell Primary in Glasgow, where children were initially enrolled at stages P1 - 5 (cf 3.2, above) and where there has been no clear policy on midstream, even mid-term entry, linguistic qualifications for such entry or, conversely, reception facilities to counteract deficit. Shades of variation in between are fully discussed above (3.2, op cit).

3.3.2.8.1 FIGURE 11: Number of children at each primary level

Stage	GAIDHEALTACHD No. of children	URBAN No. of children
Primary One	25	21
Primary Two	14	22
Primary Three	14	22
Primary Four	7	18
Primary Five		8
Primary Six		6
Primary Seven		7
TOTAL	60	104
% of GU children	37%	63%

3.3.2.9 Sex of children in Gaelic Units It is interesting to note, in passing, the heavy preponderance of boys in Gàidhealtachd Units (Fig. 12, below). In Breasclete, for example, where the Gaelic-medium class has tended in the past to represent the whole P1 intake in a small rural school, this appears to be purely coincidental. In Portree School, on the other hand - where the Gaelic Unit is more typical in that it represents

that section of the overall intake which wishes to avail itself of the Gaelic-medium facility - the trend appears to have been influenced by pre-school friendship patterns within the initial intake, indicating an area of possible future concern if balance is to be achieved in classes and/or inappropriate subconscious associations to be avoided. On a lighter note, it has been suggested that, in fifteen years time, pairing of these island boys with city GU girls might do more for language maintenance than many of the more metaphysical aspects of research and development.

3.3.2.9.1 FIGURE 12: distribution of children re sex

Sex	GAIDHEALTACHD No. of children	URBAN No. of children
FEMALE	17 (28%)	59 (57%)
MALE	43 (72%)	45 (43%)
TOTAL	60 (100%)	104(100%)

3.3.2.10 Children's linguistic background The contrast between the urban and the Gàidhealtachd samples becomes apparent from the outset (Figs. 13, 14, below). There are significant differences as regards (a) mother's "Gaelic background" and "fluency in Gaelic" (association and trend both at the level  $p > 0.01$ ), (b) father's "Gaelic background" (less significant, at the level  $p > 0.05$ ) and (c) father's "fluency in Gaelic" (highly significant at the level  $p > 0.001$ ). No significant geographical association was found in terms of families with "no parents" or "only one parent" of Gaelic antecedence, but there is a highly significant dependence and trend as regards families where "both" parents are of Gaelic antecedence (at the level  $p > 0.001$ ). Highly significant geographical associations were found for all the following (all at level  $p > 0.001$ ):

- (a) "neither parent fluent in Gaelic" (higher incidence among urban sample)
- (b) "at least one parent fluent in Gaelic" and
- (c) "both parents fluent in Gaelic" (higher among Gàidhealtachd sample)

### 3.3.2.10.1 FIGURE 13: linguistic background

	Mother has "Gaelic background"		Father has "Gaelic background"	
	GAIDHEALTACHD	URBAN	GAIDHEALTACHD	URBAN
Incidence	39	40	37	42
(Total in sub-group	52	81	52	81)
% of sub-group	(75%)	(40%)	(71%)	(52%)

### 3.3.2.10.2 FIGURE 14: competence in Gaelic

	Mother		Father	
Competence in Gaelic	GAIDHEALTACHD (% of each sub-group)	URBAN	GAIDHEALTACHD (% of each sub-group)	URBAN
No Gaelic	8 (15%)	14 (17%)	5 (10%)	34 (42%)
Learning Gaelic	5 (10%)	24 (30%)	4 (8%)	7 (9%)
Speaks some Gaelic	6 (12%)	18 (22%)	6 (12%)	20 (25%)
Fluent in Gaelic	33 (64%)	24 (30%)	35 (67%)	19 (24%)
N/K		1 (1%)		1 (1%)

### 3.3.2.10.3 FIGURE 15: presence of Gaelic-competent adults in home

	Incidence			Incidence	
No. of fluent Gaelic-speaking Gaelic adults	GAIDHEALTACHD (% of each sub-group)	URBAN	No. of read/write adults	GAIDHEALTACHD (% of each sub-group)	URBAN
No adults	10 (19%)	44 (54%)		8 (15%)	37 (46%)
1 adult	13 (25%)	30 (37%)		20 (39%)	30 (37%)
2 adults	26 (50%)	7 (9%)		21 (40%)	14 (17%)
3 adults	3 (6%)			3 (6%)	

3.3.2.11 Linguistic usage within home As may be inferred from Figs. 13 - 15 (above) there are wide variations between the urban and Gàidhealtachd samples as regards the usage of Gaelic in the home (Fig. 16, below). The incidence of Gaelic usage within this domain seems considerably higher among the Gàidhealtachd sample (both adult and child) especially as regards the important "most of" or "all the time" categories, while the doubtful "sometimes" category occurs much more frequently among the urban sample. (All associations were found to be statistically very significant - both dependence and trend - at the level  $p > 0.001$ ).

3.3.2.11.1 FIGURE 16: Linguistic usage within home: (a) adults

Frequency of use	Adults speak Gaelic together		Mother speaks Gaelic to children		Other adults speak Gaelic to children	
	GAIDHEALTACHD	URBAN	GAIDHEALTACHD	URBAN	GAIDHEALTACHD	URBAN
Never	12 (23%)	40 (49%)	7 (14%)	21 (30%)	2 (4%)	11 (14%)
Sometimes	8 (15%)	26 (32%)	11 (21%)	34 (42%)	16 (31%)	43 (53%)
Most of the time	12 (23%)	6 (7%)	13 (25%)	18 (22%)	17 (33%)	18 (22%)
All the time	18 (35%)	6 (7%)	21 (40%)	6 (7%)	17 (33%)	7 (9%)
N/K	2 (4%)	3 (4%)		2 (2%)		2 (3%)

3.3.2.11.2 FIGURE 17: linguistic usage within home: (b) children

Frequency of use	Children reply in Gaelic to adults		Children address adults in Gaelic		Children speak together in Gaelic	
	GAIDHEALTACHD	URBAN	GAIDHEALTACHD	URBAN	GAIDHEALTACHD	URBAN
Never	4 (8%)	6 (7%)	7 (14%)	14 (17%)	12 (23%)	28 (35%)
Sometimes	18 (35%)	49 (61%)	8 (35%)	50 (62%)	21 (40%)	42 (52%)
Most of the time	8 (15%)	22 (27%)	9 (17%)	12 (15%)	3 (6%)	5 (6%)
All the time	22 (42%)	4 (5%)	18 (35%)	3 (4%)	16 (31%)	- (0%)
N/K				2 (3%)		6 (7%)

3.3.2.12 Television, radio and books Again there are variations between the two sub-groups in patterns of consumption of radio and television, although these are less consistent. In the Gàidhealtachd there seems to be considerably more interest in Gaelic radio programmes among both adults and children (significant associations and trends found, at the level  $p > 0.01$  in both instances). There may be several reasons for this: there are more local-interest programmes available in the Gàidhealtachd, as already noted - 3.3.1.19, above - and the Gaelic pop-music programme "Caithris na h-Oldhche" ("*Night-visiting*") has proved enormously popular among young people, but is not available in the central belt. Also there has been considerable radio input from young people themselves, under the aegis of Guth na h-Oige ("*the Voice of Youth*" - op cit, 3.3.1.19). The Gaelic request programme "Le dùrachd" ("*With good wishes*") is broadcast simultaneously from Stornoway and Glasgow and provides a pleasant link-up between North and South every Friday evening - compulsive listening, especially for those with birthdays, anniversaries, relatives in hospital etc - but this, with its high music content, is possibly the only radio programme which might attract a faithful listening audience among urban-dwellers of limited linguistic competence, and listening habits are notoriously conservative. In many island homes the radio is turned on automatically for the Gaelic programmes, while in the cities, better served in terms of general communications, and with their own local commercial (English-medium) stations, the habit of "switching over to VHF" for the Gaelic programmes may be less ingrained. Fig. 6, above, indicates the extent to which the average Gael feels BBC Rèidio nan Gàidheal to be one of the few things in the world which is provided "specially for him".



3.3.2.13 There seems to be no significant area-dependence as regards adult Gaelic television viewing, though a significant trend was found (at the level  $p > 0.05$ ) to suggest that urban adults watch more Gaelic television. This may reflect overall viewing (and sleep!) patterns rather than loyalty to Gaelic programming. However it appears that children in the *rural* sample are *more* likely to watch Gaelic TV than their urban counterparts (significant dependence,  $p > 0.02$ , trend at  $p > 0.05$ ) - despite a remark from a teacher in a crofting community in Lewis: "the boys aren't really very aware of television - they're too busy out with their fathers, the dogs and the sheep. That's all they ever write about in their news books - that, and who's using the tractor this week" (7.2.89).

#### 3.3.2.13.1 FIGURE 18: patterns of Gaelic TV/radio consumption

	Gaelic radio; adults listen		Gaelic radio; chn, listen		Gaelic TV; adults watch		Gaelic TV; chn, watch	
Amount	GAIDHEALTACHD	URBAN	GAIDHEALTACHD	URBAN	GAIDHEALTACHD	URBAN	GAIDHEALTACHD	URBAN
None	3 (6%)	22 (27%)	12 (23%)	41 (51%)	1 (2%)	9 (11%)	1 (2%)	5 (6%)
Some	21 (40%)	35 (43%)	28 (54%)	34 (42%)	15 (29%)	25 (31%)	22 (42%)	36 (44%)
Most	19 (37%)	17 (21%)	9 (17%)	4 (5%)	16 (31%)	29 (36%)	10 (19%)	30 (37%)
All	8 (15%)	7 (9%)	2 (4%)	1 (1%)	20 (39%)	18 (22%)	19 (37%)	10 (12%)
N/K	1 (2%)		1 (2%)	1 (1%)				1 (1%)

3.3.2.14 There was no significant difference found between Urban and Gàidhealtachd samples as regards the availability of children's Gaelic books in the home.

3.3.2.15 Other non-school contexts . Fig. 19, below, illustrates the respective variations between opportunities for children to hear and use Gaelic in situations other than the school classroom:

3.3.2.15.1 "Visiting relations" revealed no statistically significant association between area and opportunity, though there is a positive trend (significant at the level  $p > 0.05$ ) for such opportunities to be greater in the Gàidhealtachd.

3.3.2.15.2 "At cèilidhs" seems to provide a fairly low-level source of input for children in both areas.

3.3.2.15.3 However, the amount of Gaelic heard "between parents' friends" is significantly greater in the Gàidhealtachd ( $p > 0.01$ ).

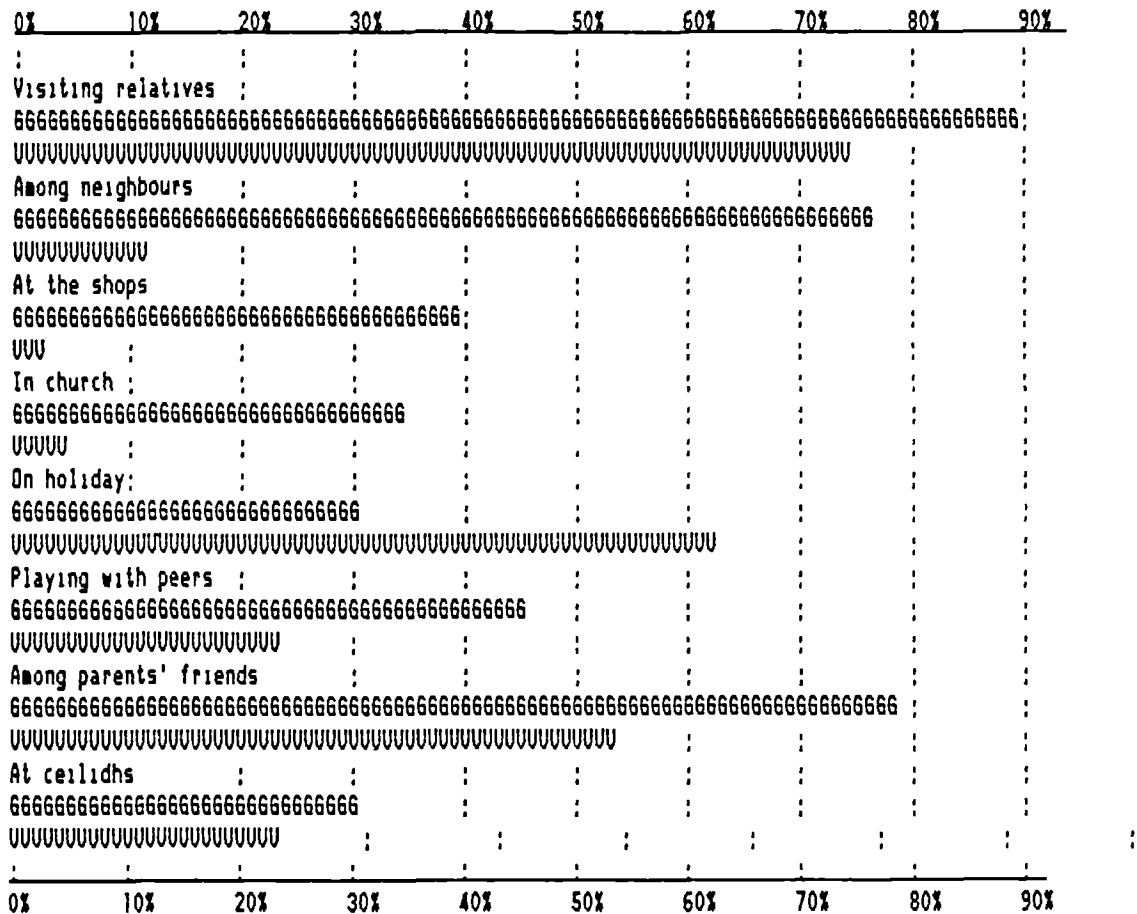
3.3.2.15.4 Conversely, urban children derive very significantly higher Gaelic input "on holiday" ( $p > 0.001$ ).

3.3.2.15.5 As expected, there is far greater use of Gaelic in the community ("among neighbours", "at shops" and "in church": very significant trends and associations -  $p > 0.001$  in each instance).

3.3.2.15.6 However "playing with other children" seems to provide relatively low input in both areas: although a significant variation was found between the two sub-groups, it was by no means as great as might be expected (dependence on area,  $p > 0.05$ , though the trend was found to be more significant, at level  $p > 0.01$ ). This indicates that habitual English usage among peers is by no means confined to urban areas, and one must conclude that the activities of youth organisations are vital in Gàidhealtachd areas if the language is to be maintained at present levels within its own heartland.

### 3.3.2.15.7 FIGURE 19: Gaelic usage in other non-school contexts

Key: GGGGGGG = % of Gàidhealtachd sample  
 UUUUUUU = % of Urban sample



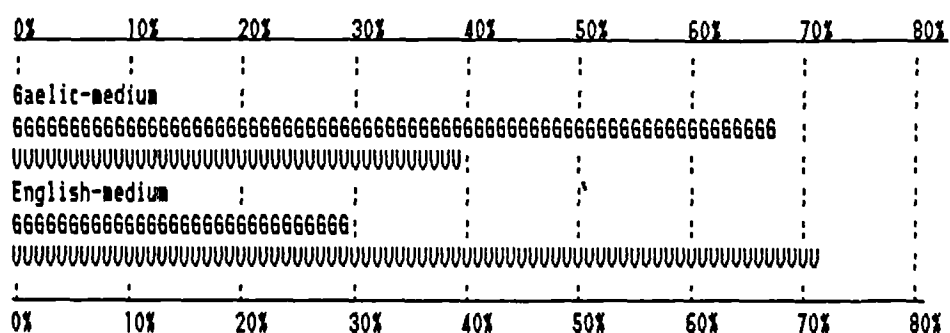
3.3.2.16 Pre-school education The following findings were based on comparison of (a) eldest children in family, and (b) second children in family - numbers in the latter cell being considerably lower, while numbers of third or subsequent children were not high enough for useful comparison. In retrospect the questionnaire might more usefully have been constructed in such a way as to facilitate comparison between age-blocks, and, thus, estimation of the historical availability of Gaelic pre-school play-groups to children in each cell: as already pointed out (3.3.1.23,

progression has been a geographically uneven, though numerically steady, increase (CNSA, 1989), largely dependent on level of interest in the community, plus the availability of Gaelic-speaking play-leaders.

3.3.2.17 However the associations which emerge seem noteworthy. It may be argued that the reasons for an individual child's failure to attend a Gaelic play-group are of secondary relevance to that child's linguistic set and competence on entry to a Gaelic-medium education programme. Fig. 20 (below) illustrates the overall numbers of Gaelic Unit children who attended (a) Gaelic-medium and (b) English-medium play-groups or nursery schools, and indicates the significant tendency for (a) more Gàidhealtachd children to have attended Gaelic-medium groups ( $p > 0.01$ ) and, conversely (b) far more urban children to have attended English-medium groups ( $p > 0.001$ ). There is a certain amount of overlap, in terms of children who attended both, in some cases concurrently (3.3.1.23, above).

3.3.2.17.1 FIGURE 20: No. of GU children who attended nursery school/play-group (% of each area sub-group)

Key: 6666666 = % of Gàidhealtachd sample  
 UUUUUUU = % of Urban sample



3.3.2.18 Again, significant differences were discovered between the number of sessions per week children in each area attended both English-medium and Gaelic-medium groups, as illustrated in Fig. 21, below. It appears that urban children tended to spend more sessions per week at both (a) Gaelic play-group (eldest child:  $p > 0.01$ ; second child: n.s. association, but trend significant at  $p > 0.05$ ) and (b) English-medium nursery school (eldest child:  $p > 0.001$ ; second child:  $p > 0.01$ ).

3.3.2.18.1 Fig. 21: No. of sessions per week of pre-school education (% of each area sub-group)

Type of education	Gaelic-medium		English-medium	
	GAIDHEALTACHD	URBAN	GAIDHEALTACHD	URBAN
Sessions per week				
One	21 (51%)	7 (17%)	9 (50%)	3 (4%)
Two	16 (39%)	17 (41%)	8 (44%)	13 (17%)
Three	4 (10%)	17 (41%)	1 (6%)	11 (15%)
Four		1 (2%)		2 (3%)
Five				46 (61%)

3.3.2.19 Duration of attendance at nursery school/play-group Although no significant variation was found between the urban and the Gàidhealtachd samples respectively in terms of the length of time spent in pre-school play-groups, it seems relevant to illustrate these durations in some detail (Fig. 21, below) if only to draw attention to the fact that a number of Gàidhealtachd GU children are recorded by their parents as having attended English-medium pre-school groups instead of, or in addition to, Gaelic play-groups. While a proportion of the urban sample, as already noted (3.3.1.23, above) had already entered school by the time Comhairle nan Sgoiltean Araich became established as a national force (1982), this is not so for the Gàidhealtachd sample, none of whom were above P4 level at the time of the investigation. There was, paradoxically, more resistance to the concept of designated Gaelic-medium play-groups in the Western Isles than in other areas: the medium in use in existent play-groups, it was argued, naturally reflected linguistic usage in the community, and to attempt to run a second ("opposition") group with a more specific language policy within a small community was seen by many to be not only divisive but impractical (in terms of venue, resources etc). Reasons for not adopting an overt language policy within existent play-groups in Gaelic areas must to some extent reflect the presence of non-Gaelic speakers in the community. For example, the present researcher convened a meeting of parents in Barra (July 1984) in which it quickly became evident that the existent play-group committee was dominated - psychologically if not numerically - by English-speaking "incomers" who felt that their contribution in having introduced the play-group concept into the community was being overlooked or diminished; their own children would be disadvantaged by the establishment

of a *cròileagan*: "the children all play together at the moment and Gaelic is not neglected. The Gaelic mums do Gaelic songs and rhymes, and our children would miss out on all that." These parents seemed unwilling to accept that their own children might also benefit from attendance of a Gaelic play-group. It is only relatively recently that many such communities have felt confident enough to participate fully in the Gaelic play-group movement - the appointment by Comhairle nan Eilean of official local development staff who work alongside the external language agencies seems to have played an important psychological part in this process - although Tiree (in Strathclyde) provides a trenchant exception to the rule: a mother (an experienced Gaelic teacher) set aside a room in her home, in which she has run a small *cròileagan* to such good effect that many local people (including non-Gaelic speaking "incomers") put their children's names on her waiting list and send them to the English group in the church hall "until they can get a place in 'Flora's play-group'".

3.3.2.19.1 FIGURE 22: Number of months' attendance, pre-school education (% of each sub-group)

Type of education	Gaelic-medium		English-medium	
	GAIDHEALTACHD	URBAN	GAIDHEALTACHD	URBAN
No. of months attended				
3-6	3 (7%)	8 (19%)	2 (11%)	5 (7%)
7-12	3 (7%)	12 (29%)	5 (28%)	31 (41%)
13-18	14 (34%)	4 (9%)	1 (5%)	7 (9%)
19-24	13 (32%)	11 (26%)	7 (39%)	26 (35%)
25-36	5 (12%)	3 (9%)	2 (11%)	6 (8%)
37-48	1 (2%)	2 (5%)		
N/K	2 (5%)	1 (3%)	1 (6%)	

3.3.2.20 **Summary** From the above findings it would appear that the need exists for official Gaelic nursery provision in all areas, to supplement and provide validation of the work of CNSA and to ensure a secure pre-school basis for children attending Gaelic-medium primary education programmes.

3.3.2.21 In *urban* areas this would appear necessary to compensate for the difficulties experienced by busy and/or working Gaelic-speaking mothers in running such groups. It has been shown (3.3.2.10.2, above) that at present only 30% of GU mothers in urban areas are fluent Gaelic speakers, and this proportion would seem likely to decrease rather than increase for the foreseeable future, if interest grows among non-Gaelic speaking participants while the adult Gaelic-speaking population of the cities remains stable or decreases. In real terms this means that the voluntary services of the minority (Gaelic-speaking parents) are constantly required to support the Gaelic input of the majority at all stages (as Gaelic play-leaders, youth club organisers, voluntary teaching auxiliaries, teachers of parents' Gaelic classes, writers and principal performers in drama events, spokespersons on committees and for the media, etc etc) and many already feel themselves to be severely overstretched.

3.3.2.22 In *Gàidhealtachd* areas it would appear expedient in order to underline official recognition of the value of pre-school Gaelic-medium experience and to encourage the participation of non-Gaelic speaking "incomers" in Gaelic education, many of whom may feel unable to contribute as they would wish to a voluntary Gaelic play-group, and, subsequently, fear that their children would be disadvantaged by participating in Gaelic-



medium primary-school programmes alongside fully fluent Gaelic-speaking children (not without some reason - McLaughlin, 1978, 163). Further discussion is contained within the report (Section 4, below) on a survey into popular attitudes towards Gaelic education (Fraser, op cit). This survey found 88% of respondents in support of official Gaelic nursery provision (ibid: 26)

3.3.2.23 Fluent Gaelic speaking children After the foregoing results it comes as no surprise to discover highly significant variations between the Urban and the Gàidhealtachd samples as regards parental assessment of their children's ability to speak Gaelic: a much higher percentage of Gàidhealtachd children was recorded as Gaelic-speaking (area association significant at the level  $p > 0.001$ ) (Fig. 23, below). This was discovered simplistically by the device of asking respondents to note how many Gaelic-speaking children lived in the home: it was considered too complicated to offer any scale of reference as to the extent of the children's competence, as this could vary from child to child within one family, even from term to term within one child's development, especially in the case of "immersion programme" L2 learners (pre-school or primary), and would be especially difficult for non-Gaelic speaking parents to complete meaningfully. It was seen merely as a litmus test whose results could be interpreted in the light of other findings and what is already known of the general characteristics of each group.

3.3.2.24 Further analysis revealed fairly startling variations within one of the sub-groups, which are fully discussed in Section 3.3.3, below, and also a marked variation between the assessment by urban parents of their

children's ability (a) to speak (Fig. 23) and (b) to read and write Gaelic (Fig. 24, below). Thus, despite the wide divergence as regards estimated oracy skills, no significant area dependence was found as regards Gaelic literacy. While this may in part be explained by the greater proportion of older children among the urban sample it may also have wider implications - pedagogical or organisational, perhaps - which require detailed examination (3.3.3, below).

3.3.2.24.1 FIG. 22: Numbers of "Gaelic speaking children", as estimated by parents: N.B. all children in all families, including those not attending Gaelic Units

AGE	GAIDHEALTACHD							URBAN						
	Gael-sp's Position in family:-				Total no, of Gaelic speakers	(% of age-group)	(Total no, in age-group)	Gael-sp's Position in family:-				Total no, of Gaelic speakers	(% of age-group)	(Total no, in age-group)
	1	2	3	4+				1	2	3	4+			
2 years	-	1	1	1	3	(50%)	(6)	-	-	-	-	-	(0%)	(8)
3 years	-	1	7	-	8	(44%)	(12)	-	2	-	-	2	(18%)	(11)
4 years	-	6	1	-	7	(58%)	(12)	-	-	-	-	-	(0%)	(17)
5 years	8	3	-	-	11	(44%)	(25)	2	-	-	-	2	(10%)	(20)
6 years	4	5	-	1	10	(77%)	(13)	3	-	-	-	3	(13%)	(23)
7 years	9	1	-	-	10	(59%)	(17)	6	1	-	-	7	(32%)	(22)
8 years	6	-	-	-	6	(50%)	(12)	6	-	-	-	6	(38%)	(16)
9 years	2	-	1	-	3	(38%)	(8)	2	1	-	-	3	(20%)	(15)
10 years	1	-	-	-	1	(13%)	(8)	2	-	-	-	2	(13%)	(15)
11 years	-	-	-	-	-	-	(0)	-	-	-	-	-	-	(0)
12 years	1	1	-	-	2	(67%)	(3)	2	-	-	-	2	(29%)	(7)
13 years	-	-	-	-	-	(0%)	(4)	-	-	-	-	-	(0%)	(6)
14 years	1	-	-	-	1	(50%)	(2)	-	-	-	-	-	(0%)	(3)
15 years	-	-	-	-	-	(0%)	(1)	-	-	-	-	-	-	(0)
16 years	-	-	-	-	-	(0%)	(1)	-	-	-	-	-	(0%)	(3)
17 years	-	-	-	-	-	(0%)	(1)	-	-	-	-	-	-	(0)
18 years	-	-	-	-	-	-	(0)	-	-	-	-	-	(0%)	(1)
TOTAL:	32	18	10	2	62	(50%)	(125)	23	4			27	(16%)	(167)

3.3.2.24.2 FIG. 24: Numbers of "Gaelic read/write children", as estimated by parents: H.B. all children in all families, including those not attending Gaelic Units

AGE	GAIDHEALTACHD							URBAN						
	Read/write child's position in family:-				Total no. of r/w chn.	(% of age-group)	(Total no. in age-group)	Read/write child's position in family:-				Total no. of r/w chn.	(% of age-group)	(Total no. in age-group)
	1	2	3	4+				1	2	3	4+			
3 years	-	1	-	-	1	(8%)	(12)	-	-	-	-	-	(0%)	(11)
4 years	-	-	-	-	-	(0%)	(12)	-	-	-	-	-	(0%)	(17)
5 years	4	3	-	-	7	(28%)	(25)	3	2	-	-	5	(25%)	(20)
6 years	4	5	-	-	9	(69%)	(13)	7	1	-	-	8	(35%)	(23)
7 years	10	-	1	-	11	(65%)	(17)	10	1	1	-	12	(55%)	(22)
8 years	8	-	-	-	8	(67%)	(12)	9	1	1	-	11	(69%)	(16)
9 years	1	-	1	-	2	(25%)	(8)	3	6	-	-	9	(60%)	(15)
10 years	-	-	-	-	-	(0%)	(8)	3	2	-	-	5	(33%)	(15)
11 years	-	-	-	-	-	-	(0)	-	-	-	-	-	-	(0)
12 years	1	1	-	-	2	(67%)	(3)	4	-	-	-	4	(57%)	(7)
13 years	1	2	-	-	3	(75%)	(4)	3	-	-	-	3	(50%)	(6)
14 years	2	-	-	-	2	(100%)	(2)	1	-	-	-	1	(33%)	(3)
15 years	1	-	-	-	1	(100%)	(1)	-	-	-	-	-	-	(0)
16 years	-	1	-	-	1	(100%)	(1)	-	1	-	-	1	(33%)	(3)
17 years	1	-	-	-	1	(100%)	(1)	-	-	-	-	-	-	(0)
18 years	-	-	-	-	-	-	(0)	1	-	-	-	1	(100%)	(1)
TOTAL.	33	13	2	-	48	(38%)	(125)	44	14	2	-	60	(36%)	(167)

3.3.2.25 Summary Children are described by their parents as having certain (undefined) levels of fluency in Gaelic (oral/aural skills) in 50% of cases among the Gàidhealtachd group, but only 16% among the urban group; on the other hand the percentages claiming literacy skills for their children are remarkably uniform for the two samples - 38% and 36% respectively. It is this anomaly which will be examined in 3.3.3, below.

### 3.3.3 THE URBAN SAMPLE

3.3.3.1 Children's estimated Gaelic competence (oracy v. literacy) On further analysis of findings expressed in Figs. 23 and 24 (above) it becomes clear that there is wide variation between data recorded for (a) Sir John Maxwell Primary School, Glasgow, and (b) Central Primary School, Inverness. As illustrated in Fig. 24, below, 63% of parents in Sir John Maxwell (SJM) consider their children to have Gaelic literacy skills, but only 16% record them as "Gaelic speakers"; parents in Central School (CS), on the other hand, record little difference between the two areas of competence, and such variation as does arise (4%) seems based on age differential - i.e. one 5-year old child is recorded as Gaelic-speaking but not Gaelic-literate. CS children appear to be seen by their parents as progressing steadily towards Gaelic oracy and literacy, SJM children as progressing steadily towards literacy but not oracy, within their respective Gaelic Units.

3.3.3.1.1 FIGURE 25: Children's estimated oracy v. literacy skills

	CENTRAL			SIR JOHN MAXWELL						
Age of child;	ORACY		LITERACY		(Total in sub-group)	ORACY		LITERACY		(Total in sub-group)
	No. of chn.	(% of sub-g'p)	No. of chn.	(% of sub-g'p)		No. of chn.	(% of sub-g'p)	No. of chn.	(% of sub-g'p)	
4	-	(0%)	-	(0%)	1	-	-	-	-	0
5	1	(33%)	-	-	1	1	(13%)	3	(38%)	8
6	2	(29%)	2	(29%)	7	1	(8%)	5	(42%)	12
7	5	(83%)	5	(83%)	6	2	(20%)	6	(60%)	10
8	4	(100%)	4	(100%)	4	2	(18%)	7	(64%)	11
9	2	(100%)	2	(100%)	2	1	(10%)	7	(70%)	10
10	-	-	-	-	0	2	(20%)	9	(90%)	10
11	-	-	-	-	0	-	-	-	-	0
12	-	-	-	-	0	1	(33%)	3	(100%)	3
TOTAL	14	(61%)	13	(57%)	23	10	(16%)	40	(63%)	64

3.3.3.2 **Introductory comments** These two units (as already discussed, 3.2.2, 3.2.3, above) were both established at the same time (August, 1985) as a result of similar parental demand in each city and - in general - with very similar initial problems: lack of Gaelic-medium resources, pre-service teacher training and experience in "immersion" methods with mixed groups of native-speakers and L2 learners; they both drew on wide catchments, which raised initial problems in terms of transportation, and both were situated within larger urban primary schools whose Head Teachers were in neither instance Gaelic-speaking. The lack of pre-service training was "solved" in the short term by a brief visit to Wales, undertaken by a joint party from each school. In the long-term staff in both schools have had equal access to inter-authority in-service training courses, and have participated in their own local in-service exercises. In both instances parents were - and have continued to be - highly involved in and supportive of the education of their children, running play-groups, undertaking voluntary classroom auxiliary work, producing teaching materials, organising extra-curricular social and artistic experiences to provide extra linguistic input for the children and cohesion for their own group, fund-raising, public relations etc.

3.3.3.3 **Analysis of the children's linguistic background** reveals no statistically significant variations between the two samples as regards any of the following indices:

3.3.3.3.1 **Mother's "Gaelic background" or "fluency"**

3.3.3.3.2 Father's "Gaelic background" or "fluency"

3.3.3.3.3 Neither parent with "Gaelic background"

3.3.3.3.4 Neither parent fluent in Gaelic

3.3.3.3.5 At least one parent fluent in Gaelic

3.3.3.3.6 Both parents fluent in Gaelic

3.3.3.3.7 Mother's status as regards employment

3.3.3.3.8 Adult Gaelic usage within the home:

(a) adults speak Gaelic together

(b) mother speaks Gaelic to children

(c) Other adults speak Gaelic to children

3.3.3.4 No significant variations were found as regards children's overall opportunities to hear and use Gaelic outwith the school, with two exceptions as noted below:

3.3.3.4.1 Visiting relatives: n.s.

3.3.3.4.2 Among neighbours: n.s.

3.3.3.4.3 At the shops: n.s.

3.3.3.4.4 In church: n.s.

3.3.3.4.5 On holiday: children from Glasgow more likely to have such opportunities (significant association at the level  $p > 0.01$ )

3.3.3.4.6 Playing with other children: n.s.

3.3.3.4.7 Among parents' friends: n.s.

3.3.3.4.8 At cèilidhs: there was no significant association found, but a trend (significant at the level  $p > 0.05$ ) suggests children in Glasgow may have more such opportunities.

3.3.3.5 As regards children's usage of Gaelic within the home, there are indications that more Inverness children may voluntarily use Gaelic in this context:

3.3.3.5.1 Children reply to adults: n.s.

3.3.3.5.2 Children address adults: there was no significant dependence on area, but a trend was found (significance:  $p > 0.05$ ) which suggests that a higher proportion of Inverness children is likely to address adults in Gaelic than their Glasgow counterparts (fig. 26, below):

3.3.3.5.2.1 FIGURE 26: Children address adults in Gaelic

	CENTRAL			SIR JOHN MAXWELL		
	No.	(% of <i>sub-gr'p</i> )	Total no. of families	No.	(% of <i>sub-gr'p</i> )	Total no. of families
Never	3	(15%)	20	11	(24%)	46
Sometimes	10	(50%)		28	(61%)	
Often	5	(25%)		6	(13%)	
All the time	2	(10%)		1	(2%)	

3.3.3.5.3 Children speak together in Gaelic: no significant association found, but there may be a trend ( $p = 0.05$ ) to indicate proportionally greater inter-sibling usage of Gaelic among Inverness children (Fig. 27, below):

3.3.3.5.3.1 FIGURE 27: Children speak together in Gaelic

	CENTRAL			SIR JOHN MAXWELL		
	No.	(% of <i>sub-gr'p</i> )	Total no. of families	No.	(% of <i>sub-gr'p</i> )	Total no. of families
Never	4	(20%)	20	17	(37%)	46
Sometimes	11	(55%)		25	(54%)	
Often	3	(15%)		2	(4%)	
All the time	-	(0%)		-	(0%)	
N/K	2	(10%)		2	(4%)	

3.3.3.5.4 Children's viewing of Gaelic television programmes, listening to Gaelic radio programmes: n.s., though Glasgow parents appear to watch more Gaelic TV programmes than Inverness parents (the association is significant at  $p > 0.05$ , trend more significant at  $p > 0.01$ ).



3.3.3.5.5 Children's Gaelic books in the home: there was no significant association, but a trend (with significance at the level  $p > 0.05$ ) suggests that Gaelic books may be slightly more readily available in Inverness homes.

3.3.3.6 Attendance of pre-school nurseries/play-groups Statistically significant variations emerge, however, as regards the pre-school educational experience of the two groups. On the one hand, more Inverness GU children appear to have attended Gaelic play-group than their Glasgow counterparts; on the other, Glasgow GU children seem much more likely to have attended English nursery school, and for considerably more sessions per week (by far the majority, for 5 sessions i.e. "full-time" attendance). In interpreting these findings (Figs. 28, and 29, below) two factors should be borne in mind:

3.3.3.6.1 (a) a higher proportion of SJM children are of an age to have missed out on the opportunity of Gaelic play-group attendance - i.e. they were already in school by the time these were established in Glasgow, owing to Strathclyde Regional Council's decision to sanction an initial intake into SJM of Primaries 1 - 5 (as opposed to Highland Regional Council's confining the original intake to P1). This would suggest that a higher proportion of Glasgow GU children may attend Gaelic play-groups in future, with the existence of two Gaelic primary Units in the city to encourage such attendance;

3.3.3.6.2 (b) on the other hand there is a danger the dichotomy may in fact be widened in future, since the establishment by Highland

Regional Council, in August 1988, of a full-time (i.e. 5 mornings per week) Gaelic-medium nursery class, fully equipped, and professionally staffed by a trained teacher and a nursery nurse. Bearing in mind that no statistically significant difference could be found between the maternal employment patterns of the two groups, and that, if anything, greater pressures (of distance, pace of life, etc) are likely to pertain in a larger city, it would seem that Inverness GU children will have a considerable advantage over Glasgow GU children in terms of pre-school preparation for Gaelic-medium education in future.

3.3.3.7 The following tables illustrate variations between SJM and CS children's attendance of pre-school play-groups and nurseries (Gaelic and English) as already discussed, 3.3.3.6, above.

3.3.3.7.1 FIGURE 28: comparison between SJM and CS children in terms of overall attendance at (a) Gaelic play-group (b) English nursery-school or play-group (sig. association  $p > 0.05$ ; trend  $p > 0.01$ )

	GAELIC-MEDIUM		ENGLISH-MEDIUM	
	CENTRAL	SIR JOHN MAXWELL	CENTRAL	SIR JOHN MAXWELL
Did not attend	11 (48%)	47 (73%)	11 (48%)	13 (20%)
Attended	12 (52%)	17 (27%)	12 (52%)	51 (80%)

3.3.3.7.2 FIGURE 29: comparison between SJM and CS GU children in terms of number of sessions per week each group attended (a) Gaelic play-group (b) English nursery-school or play-group (v. sig. association and trend  $p > 0.001$ )

No. of sessions per week	GAELIC-MEDIUM		ENGLISH-MEDIUM	
	CENTRAL	SIR JOHN MAXWELL	CENTRAL	SIR JOHN MAXWELL
One	1 (4%)	2 (3%)	3 (13%)	-
Two	3 (13%)	10 (16%)	5 (22%)	3 (5%)
Three	7 (30%)	4 (2%)	3 (13%)	5 (8%)
Four	1 (4%)	-	-	1 (2%)
Five	-	-	1 (4%)	42 (66%)

**3.3.3.8 Comparison with other GU's** In order to discover whether the variation between SJM and CS children's estimated fluency in Gaelic might be coincidental or aberrational, comparisons were made between samples as follows, as regards parental estimation of their children's Gaelic oracy and literacy

**3.3.3.8.1** Central school vs. all GU's in Skye: no statistically significant difference as regards either estimated oracy or literacy of children

**3.3.3.8.2** Central School vs all GU's in Comhairle nan Eilean (a) oracy. no significant variation found when children considered together, as a single group; when considered separately (i.e cells made up re "first child in family", "second child in family" etc) numbers are small, but there were indications of a trend in favour of Comhairle nan Eilean, in line with expectations (i.e higher proportion of L2 learners entering P1 in Central School) (b) literacy no significant association

**3.3.3.8.3** All GU's in Skye vs all GU's in Comhairle nan Eilean. as for Central School vs. Comhairle nan Eilean - as regards literacy the recorded values are almost identical

**3.3.3.8.4** Sir John Maxwell vs Central School (cf Fig. 25, above). (a) oracy. very significant association for eldest children in family (at the level  $p > 0.0001$ ), no significant association for second and

subsequent children (again, as predicted - reflecting expected progression in estimated competence); (b) literacy: not significant when either first or subsequent children were compared

3.3.3.8.5 SJM vs. all GU's in Skye: (a) oracy: dependence with regard to eldest children significant at level  $p > 0.001$ ; second and subsequent children, n.s. (b) literacy: as for SJM vs. Central

3.3.3.8.6 SJM vs. all GU's in Comhairle nan Eilean: (a) oracy: very significant variation as regards first child ( $p > 0.0001$ ); second child: numbers were small, but there were indications of a trend towards higher degree of fluency among Comhairle nan Eilean children; (b) literacy: n.s. - either child

3.3.3.8.7 Similar comparisons were made between SJM and (a) Meadowburn Primary School in Bishopbriggs and (b) Tollcross Primary (Edinburgh). Estimated Gaelic competence here was found to be much more similar - but it is doubtful whether much can be read into this result. Firstly returns from these latter schools are very small (cf 3.3.2.7.1) and secondly children had been in attendance at the Units for less than a year in each instance.

3.3.3.8.8 Conclusions As already suggested (3.3.1.6, above) parental estimation is by no means a reliable measure of actual competence; however, one might have predicted a tendency for proud and highly-committed parents to over-estimate, rather than to under-estimate, children's linguistic skills. Indeed, this argument might counsel caution in interpreting parental response from Central School, Inverness, though study visits

(described in 3.2, above) did indicate a considerable gulf between the overall *productive* (as opposed to *passive*) linguistic skills in evidence in the two GU's respectively. This Report, however, must confine itself to examination of the present findings. These, *qua* reflections of subjective parental assessment of the overt linguistic behaviour of their own children, suggests that Sir John Maxwell Gaelic Unit is not felt by the majority of parents to have altered that behaviour in terms of producing "Gaelic speaking children", whatever definition is employed (or maintaining it, in the case of native-speaking children) while Central School is felt to have that effect by the majority of parents.

3.3.3.8.9 The problems which teachers have faced in Sir John Maxwell Gaelic Unit have already been described in some detail (3.2.2, above) and the differences between their situation and that of teachers in Inverness are self-evident. The most pressing of these may be briefly summarised in terms of

3.3.3.8.9.1 (a) "inherited" problems: a top-heavy initial intake in which only the very youngest received any sustained form of language "immersion"; large composite classes with widely varying abilities, both general and linguistic; lack of preparation in terms of resource production, philosophical argument, methodological rationale and public relations, within the school and in the surrounding community

3.3.3.8.9.2 (b) "imposed" problems: mid-stream entry of non-Gaelic speaking children at all stages of the educational process and without any form of reception facilities or compensatory teaching support;

lack of official clarity regarding appropriate length of initial *immersion* - in practice much shorter than in Units in Highland Region or Comhairle nan Eilean, despite the relative lack of pre-school Gaelic educational experience among Glasgow children underlined by the present Report; pressure to "integrate" into a whole-school community and resultant dilution of cultural identity and, for children, loss of wide range of Gaelic-medium experiences, for teachers, lack of opportunity to use Gaelic among themselves for social and professional communication

3.3.3.8.9.3 (c) "self-perpetuating problems": lack of clarity as regards the use of the two languages within the classroom in a so-called "bilingual" situation (i.e. code-switching and/or parallel use of both languages - adhoc and pragmatic, according to language functions, and/or consistent and planned, according to curricular areas); lack of detailed and continuous consultation with parents as to their long-term expectations and educational priorities.

3.3.3.8.10 If the general expectations and educational priorities of the present sample revolve around the creation of bilingual children then the findings would suggest a degree of implicit disappointment in results perceptible thus far, suggesting a need for fairly radical measures in order to alter the present situation. If, on the other hand, the majority of parents are satisfied with their children's all-round progress, notwithstanding the apparent lack of change in their overt linguistic behaviour, this in turn has important implications, suggesting that perhaps

Sir John Maxwell GU is (or should be) viewed as having intrinsically different aims and objectives from other, superficially comparable units in other communities, such as more general cultural enrichment rather than linguistic acquisition and/or maintenance.

3.3.3.8.11 If consultation between school and parents should confirm the latter, this would in turn seem to have important implications in terms of planning for secondary educational development: Gaelic-medium transmission of complex subject-matter at this stage might be ill-advised if linguistic expectations were set permanently low in the primary school, by force of circumstance and/or lack of definition of provision essential to achieve the desired linguistic goals. As Skuttnab-Kangas puts it (op cit: 21):

3.3.3.8.11.1 "We want our children to become bilingual, not monolingual or strongly dominant in either of the two languages. One of the confusing facts has been that many majority educational authorities claim that they want children to become bilingual too. But when this claim is analysed, it transpires that the *definitions* used by majorities and minorities of bilingualism as the educational goal are different....When majority educational authorities talk about bilingualism...they seem to mean either a non-demanding competence definition (can produce complete meaningful utterances in the other language, or has at least some knowledge and control of the grammatical structure of the other language) or the most general function definition (uses two languages). We minorities would rather like to use...a definition which makes sure that the speaker has the



chance to learn and use *both* languages at a very high level and identify positively with both".

### 3.4 CASE STUDIES

*"The world is not unifiable on the basis of cultural monisms"*

*(Fishman, 1976: 9)*

### 3.4 CASE STUDIES

**3.4.1 Introduction** The case-studies which follow have been compiled as a result of close relationships maintained over considerable periods of time with each of the families involved (in some cases since the birth of one or more of the children) culminating in interviews held recently in order to check, update and formalise the data. The families in each case include pupils attending Gaelic Units in Glasgow, Inverness or Edinburgh. As will be seen, the circumstances of all the families are diverse - although certain common factors emerge.

**3.4.2 Aims of the Case studies** The studies aim to highlight the attitudes of urban-dwelling parents towards Gaelic, their motives for opting for Gaelic education for their children, the difficulties they have encountered in attempting to raise children bilingually in an urban context, etc. It is not suggested that any or all of these will differ *per se* from attitudes, difficulties or expectations of parents in rural communities. All parents (urban or rural, Gaelic-speaking or not) can be expected to have some difficulties in common in an English-dominant society, and to invest in the official educational system some of the long-term linguistic responsibilities formerly associated exclusively with the family environment. (This hypothesis is based on documented parental accounts and correspondences, e.g. Arnberg, 1987; de Jong, 1986; Grosjean, 1982; Miller, 1983, *Bilingual Family Newsletter*, etc.)

**3.4.3 Organisation of the Studies** The studies are arranged as follows:

**3.4.3.1 (a) both parents bilingual Gaelic/English speakers**

(b) Gaelic-speaking mother, non-Gaelic speaking father

(c) Gaelic-speaking father, non-Gaelic speaking mother

(d) neither parent Gaelic-speaking.

### 3.4.4 Both parents Gaelic speaking

#### 3.4.4.1 Family "A"

3.4.4.1.1 Family "A" lives in Glasgow. Both parents came from the Western Isles - Mrs A to obtain College training, Mr A for employment (skilled manual). They met in the city and have lived since their marriage in a small tenement flat in a district with a fairly high concentration of Gaelic speakers. The catchment primary school has several Gaelic-speaking members of staff, including the Headteacher, and a voluntary Gaelic play-group is run within the school. Despite parental demand Gaelic has never been officially provided in the catchment secondary school. Pupils have relied on unofficial lunch time classes, taught voluntarily by a staff member trained in another discipline. In recent years the Regional Council has provided free bus passes for examination candidates to travel to the Gaelic Department in a fairly distant school - an arrangement which has proved less than satisfactory, according to Mrs A.

3.4.4.1.2 Mrs A has played an active part in Gaelic-related activities in the area, though usually in the "Martha" rôle (baking, washing up, setting up stalls etc). She is a member of several committees but shuns the more high-profile, public speaking offices. She maintains close links with the Gàidhealtachd, following all social and Gaelic-related developments through the Highland press, taking the children on regular extended visits to her own and her husband's family homes, constantly providing "open house" for relatives, friends and friends of friends from the Islands. She has an almost encyclopaedic knowledge of the Gaelic-speaking population in Glasgow - who is related to whom, where they come from, where they live, their

employment and their children's movements.... But Mrs A is not what other cultures might identify as a "gossip", as her natural reserve, high moral principles and personal sensitivity vouchsafe: her knowledge derives directly from traditional Gaelic kinship values and might not too fancifully be described as a modern continuation of the oral genealogical tradition.

3.4.4.1.2 There are three children - aged 18, 16 and 8 respectively. A1 and A2 are in the final stages of secondary education, both hoping to enter University. A1 has recently passed Higher Grade Gaelic, despite having had only one study-period per week throughout his final year, the majority of which was spent "on a bus", as described above. Mrs A says that A2 will not avail himself of this facility, but will confine his study to the voluntary classes: "the teacher is excellent. They're far better off with him than sitting in a bus losing valuable school time."

3.4.4.1.3 From birth to four years old A1 heard only Gaelic. Gaelic was the family language; the paternal grand mother lived with the family during this time and spent a great deal of time with the child; friends and relatives who visited were Gaelic speaking; Mrs A's brother lived nearby, had a Gaelic-related job and married a Gaelic speaker. At the age of four A1 was virtually monoglot Gaelic speaking and the local Authority gave him a priority placement in an English-medium nursery school on linguistic grounds. Despite this the child knew very little English when he started primary school, a situation which presented little trauma due to the high concentration of Gaelic speaking teachers in the local school. "I might have worried otherwise, but I knew his teacher - she had quite a lot of

other children in the same boat and she spoke Gaelic and English as required." But by the end of his first year in primary school A1 was speaking more English than Gaelic, and although the parents have made a practice of speaking Gaelic to all of their children A1 increasingly replied in English. Mrs A feels deep regret that full-scale Gaelic-medium education was not available at the time.

3.4.4.1.4 A2's speech was at a vital stage in its development at the time when A1 was introducing English into the home. As an English-medium nursery placing was not available for A2 Mrs A herself "made a more conscious effort to use some English with him before he set off for school". She thinks, in retrospect, that both parents fell unwittingly into the habit of using English with the children in certain more enjoyable contexts (e.g. interfamilial banter, especially when the children's friends from outside were present) and using Gaelic to discipline the children. Certainly A2 used more English than A1 from his earliest years.

3.4.4.1.5 However both children were bilingual, both used both languages in some contexts, with their parents and between each other. And in some ways Mrs A thinks A2 is "more interested" in Gaelic than A1. An upsurge in the children's Gaelic usage dates from the birth of A3: she became, as it were, a focus for their Gaelic usage. "Of course you can't talk English to babies", Mrs A says. The brothers adopted the same habitual usage of Gaelic with their much younger sister. "They spoilt her terribly, and they spoke Gaelic to her. It was good for us all". It was at this time that Fionnlagh MacLeòid began his evangelistic mission to set up Gaelic-medium play-groups throughout Scotland (3.1, above). The A family home was "his first port of

call. He practically lived with us, and he was great with the children. It made us all think about Gaelic, where we just used it before among ourselves more or less unconsciously."

3.4.4.1.6 Mrs A helped MacLeòid to establish a Gaelic play-group, raised funds and became its play-leader, and A3 was among the first intake. And in turn Mrs A naturally became involved in the lobby to continue the process into the primary school. "We had seen what a difference it made to \_\_\_\_\_. She didn't feel the need to start speaking English the way the others did, because all her friends at play-group were speaking Gaelic too. We didn't want to lose all that when she went to school." Another play-group mother, whose child was due to start school a year earlier than A3, became even more militant: as Mrs A says

3.4.4.1.6.1 "\_\_\_\_\_ went down to the school the day they had to enrol the wee ones. She told them in no uncertain terms that she didn't want her child to go to their school at all. She wanted her to go to a Gaelic school. She was hoping the Gaelic school would be started in time, but if it wasn't she said she supposed she'd just have to put up with their English school willy nilly".

3.4.4.1.7 A Gaelic Unit was started in time for A3 to attend: but Mrs A feels a sense of irrevocable loss for her older children and others like them. "Oh they're bilingual. You couldn't say they're not. \_\_\_\_\_ (A1) answered the phone the other day - it was a friend of mine. She thought she was talking to his father and he didn't bother to put her right; he just spoke away to her in Gaelic and wrote down the message for me. He was



writing down the message in English and talking to her in Gaelic at the same time, so I suppose you'd call that bilingual":

3.4.4.1.7.1 "But they would have got so much more out of Gaelic-medium education, and they wouldn't be struggling now with 'Learners' Gaelic' in the secondary. There were so many like them at that time with Gaelic in the home. You wonder now what the Gaelic Unit would have been like if they'd started it then."

3.4.4.1.8 A3 entered the Gaelic Unit direct from Gaelic play-group, having had no organised English-medium pre-school experience. When I met her at the Gaelic play-group she was virtually monolingual. In her first year at school - the year officially designated "Gaelic immersion" - I observed her "helping" other children by translating into English. About half-way through her first year in the Gaelic Unit she told her mother that "she was going to speak English now till all the others catch up". Four years later, she replies habitually in English when addressed in Gaelic by her parents in the home; she talks only English to her play-mates, even those with whom she played in Gaelic in the play-group and whose first language was Gaelic. Her mother is disappointed at this turn of events, but is fiercely loyal to the school, and hopes "things may change in the future. At least we feel we've done all we could - more than the boys got". She has her own ideas as to how things might have been better organised in the Unit, but keeps them to herself. "I daren't say too much. There was a while I was always asking \_\_\_\_\_ what she had done in school, and eventually she just wouldn't say. It's not right to interrogate children, is it?"

#### 3.4.4.2 Family "B"

3.4.4.2.1 Mr and Mrs B are a professional couple both with Gaelic-related occupations. Their three children are 16, 13 and 9. The two younger children are both in Gaelic bilingual education programmes. The older attends a secondary school which does not teach Gaelic.

3.4.4.2.2 Mr B is a native Gaelic-speaker from the Western Isles. Gaelic was his first language, and he spoke little English when he entered primary school. His family are all involved in Gaelic activities, though all living in urban situations on the mainland. His brother's children have not been brought up Gaelic-speaking: their mother was inhibited about speaking the language. Although her parents were both Gaelic-speaking islanders, she was brought up in the city at a time when less priority was given to raising children bilingually and less tolerance shown either to learners of Gaelic or to speakers of less common dialects (her father was from Mull). She understands Gaelic completely but only recently has begun to speak it with any degree of comfort.

3.4.4.2.3 (This theme has been a leitmotif in interviews: one middle-aged city-born woman told me how her father spent all his spare time in running Gaelic-related activities in the city, and his children were brought up feeling themselves to be "Highland" - "Gael" even, although they did not speak Gaelic: "we were proud of being Gaels. We never thought of ourselves as city children though we've lived here all our lives. We were in the Gaelic choir, we went to all the Mods, we spent all our holidays in the Islands". But no attempt was made to teach the children Gaelic either in

the home or even by sending them to a secondary school which taught the language. Again, an elderly Glasgow woman described how she married her Gaelic-speaking husband hoping to be welcomed into Gaelic-speaking society, but felt in practice excluded from the most vital manifestation of that society: "I wanted him to speak Gaelic to me, to teach it to me, but whenever I was around they would speak English however much I protested. Then they would go out into the kitchen and speak Gaelic together. I don't know how they thought I could ever learn it. I sometimes wonder if they really wanted outsiders to learn it anyway.")

3.4.4.2.4 On the other hand, Mr B's sister and brother-in-law have successfully brought up their two children bilingually in an urban context without the support of official Gaelic-medium education programmes. Mr B's brother-in-law feels that they could not have achieved this if his wife had been working: it was she who had the main responsibility in day-to-day rearing of the children, and she used every available strategy to ensure that they met other Gaelic speaking children in a semi-organised way (long before the national Gaelic play-group movement had been established) and spent time with adult Gaelic speakers both at home and on holiday in the islands. They were fortunate in living in a town with a strong Gaelic presence, with the maternal grandparents living close by, and that several other young families were committed to pursuing the same ends at roughly the same time that their elder child was growing up. When the younger was born his brother was completely bilingual, so sibling communication was established from the beginning. Both children have studied Gaelic as a secondary subject at school and the elder is now in Gaelic-related employment.

3.4.4.2.5 Mr B did not study Gaelic formally at any stage of his educational career, though Gaelic was used informally in his primary school in the islands. At the age of eleven he was forced to attend a centrally-based secondary school and lived in a local authority-run hostel during the week. This seems to have been a traumatic experience - the environment was felt to be foreign and unfriendly both socially and culturally - another recurrent theme in interviews with Island Gaelic-speakers. Mr B decided to take French instead of Gaelic as his principal language study at secondary school, feeling that, having been taught basic Gaelic literacy skills in primary school, French would be of more use to him. (Interestingly, his sister enrolled recently in an adult Gaelic literacy class along with several other apparently highly-literate Gaelic speakers: "It's interesting and a bit unnerving" the teacher of this class has observed to me. "They have such wonderful idiomatic Gaelic, but all they want is grammar - they feel they know how the language works, but not why. It's the opposite of all the other classes I've ever taught where people would give anything to be able to speak the language and never mind the rules.")

3.4.4.2.6 Mrs B, on the other hand, learned Gaelic at a Highland secondary school, having non-Gaelic speaking but culturally aware parents: "it never occurred to me to take French, even though almost all the "A" class took it. We were taught Gaelic through the medium of English, which meant that I got on as well, or maybe even better, than the native speakers in my class. I was good at Gaelic in the same way that I was good at Latin - it was all grammatical rules and formal translations. I left school able to read

seventeenth century *bàrdachd*, but I couldn't say 'pass the salt' or write a letter to a friend in Gaelic".

3.4.4.2.7 She was determined that her children would be brought up Gaelic speaking, and spoke nothing but Gaelic to her first-born (B1). "It wasn't easy at all. There were obvious things, like all the children's television was in English - I would sit with the sound down, telling him what was going on in Gaelic; I stuck Gaelic over the English in his books; I had to have three-way conversations with the neighbours, and not all of them were sympathetic". Even Gaelic speakers could be discouraging - "you're holding them back" was a comment she received from an elderly Gaelic-speaking uncle. But there were less obvious difficulties too: "I felt cut off from all the wee things my own mother used to say to me - little sayings and rhymes and things - I had to find out how you spoke to a baby in Gaelic. Our Gaelic teacher never told us the Gaelic for belly-button. In a way I felt deprived of some element of closeness with him." However there were advantages; "it was through talking to the baby I got confident in Gaelic. Babies don't put your grammar right all the time - not like my husband: he was always correcting me, till eventually I just spoke English to him. But the baby was great practice: I used to say something to him and then think 'no, that's wrong' and say it again correctly - and then after that I'd always be able to say it right. He never complained!"

3.4.4.2.8 B1 (a highly-communicative child) was fully fluent in Gaelic but "knew enough English to 'get by' with non-Gaelic speakers" when he entered English-medium nursery school at the age of 3+. Mrs B was by then working,

expecting their second child, and Gaelic play-groups had not been thought of. English quickly became the child's language of choice. "It wasn't that he couldn't speak Gaelic any more. It was as if he didn't want to. It happened so quickly - I wouldn't have believed it. His wee friend's daddy was Norwegian. He would come in boasting that he could speak words in Norwegian and then he would refuse to answer us in Gaelic. I felt very hurt by it all. I felt I had failed, and of course there was no-one else around trying to do what we were doing, to compare notes with and get help."

3.4.4.2.9 The family advertised in the press for a Gaelic-speaking home-help in the hopes that this would reinforce B1's Gaelic and help to establish it as B2's first language. It appeared to make very little difference. The parents and the home help spoke Gaelic to the baby, but gradually "gave in" with B1. "There didn't seem any point. Everything we would say to him, he'd reply in English. You just ended up getting mad with him. At the end of it all it was a big strain, and we spoke English to him unless we were in, say, a restaurant and he was being naughty. Then we'd tell him in Gaelic to sit up straight and stop kicking the table. I felt \_\_\_\_\_ (B2) was getting thoroughly confused. Her first sentences were a mixture of the two languages and half the time she seemed to make up words, not Gaelic, not English, and use them in preference. We would get her to pronounce the Gaelic - and she could. Then she'd laugh and go on using her made-up word."

3.4.4.2.10 B2 never became fully established in her use of Gaelic, and by the time B3 was born Mrs B made a conscious decision to speak English to the baby. "It felt awful, speaking English to a baby. I was quite

conscience-stricken about it for ages. But you soon get into the habit." Ironically it was at this stage that the Gaelic play-group movement was established. A cròileagan was set up locally in time for B3 to attend for a short time before entering primary school. "I couldn't believe how quickly her Gaelic came on. Even in that short time. It got us all started again, trying to pick up where we had left off with the others. If I'd known what was going to happen I'd never have spoken English to any of them. All the mothers were doing the same thing and you found out everyone had the same problems. It wasn't all my fault after all. I think that was the most useful thing of all - to make contact with other people."

3.4.4.2.11 Like Mrs A (above) Mrs B became involved in the political movement to establish Gaelic-medium primary education. By the time the Gaelic Unit was set up B1 was in secondary school, B2 was about to enter primary 5, and B3 Primary 2. The decision to enrol B2 at that stage in her education was not easy, despite the family's commitment to the principle of Gaelic-medium education, but "we just crossed our fingers and hoped for the best". In the event the family has had no cause to regret their decision, though feeling, like many other parents, that this particular Gaelic Unit has had "more than its fair share of teething problems: the children haven't in fact had as much consistent exposure to Gaelic as we would have liked". But they understand and sympathise with the causes and feel that their two younger children will probably be bilingual by the end of their formal school education.

3.4.4.2.12 "The Unit has focused our attention on Gaelic in the home again. We use Gaelic now in a way I'm sure we never would have, as \_\_\_\_\_

(B1) doesn't really remember any at all now. We don't want to put any pressure on him - he's very interested in languages and very good at them, which I'm sure is due to his early bilingualism, and he'll probably take up Gaelic later when he feels like it." Like Mrs A (above) she feels regret that these facilities arrived too late for her eldest child ("the really bilingual one"). B2 and B3 do not use Gaelic in preference to English in any context except when playing at schools. They usually require prompting to reply to their parents in Gaelic - but B2 commented that "it is only really with my parents I don't speak Gaelic. If anyone else talks Gaelic to me I just reply in Gaelic without thinking. I don't know why it is. Laziness, I think, with my mother, sort of embarrassment, maybe, with my father." Now in secondary school, she has found no difficulty in her French and German classes, and like all the other Gaelic Unit children is doing well in all subjects.

3.4.4.2.14 B3's communicative Gaelic seems to reflect her relative lack of self-consciousness, having begun the language at an earlier stage in the primary than her sister. Her accent is generally better and she has more readily assimilated complexities of construction (e.g. question-answer forms). However B2's attitude towards the language reflects her greater awareness of the political process by which the Unit was established, and she seems more consciously "committed" to learning and attempting to use Gaelic.



### 3.4.4.3 Family "C"

3.4.4.3.1 Mr and Mrs C met in Edinburgh and learned Gaelic together, through distance learning, evening classes, weekend residential courses, summer schools "and every other way we could think of - cèilidhs, radio, visiting, church..."

3.4.4.3.2 Mr C was born and brought up in the South of England, Mrs C in the USA. He had an Aberdeenshire grandmother and had been introduced to Gaelic as an apprentice in Glasgow, through hearing it spoken by large numbers of his workmates at John Brown's Shipyard. She was a graduate anti-Vietnam demonstrator who had become interested in Welsh after discovering (on a year's "sabbatical" in Manchester) that Welsh activists followed the same "anti-violence training" techniques that she had learned in America. He had been a mature student studying engineering in Edinburgh University while she was taking a second degree, in Welsh language and literature, at Bangor College. Mr C says: "When I finished my degree I put my books away and got down to learning Gaelic. Coming up to Scotland had been like coming home to me - and I wanted to be able to speak the language as well".

3.4.4.3.3 When their child was on the way they decided to bring him/her up Gaelic-speaking. Mrs C was a little worried that her Gaelic would not be sufficiently fluent, but they enlisted the help of "everyone they could think of" to speak Gaelic to them - and to the baby ("some people thought we were potty, but others were quite glad to help"). Neither parent has

used English with the child - ever. She is now in P5 - totally fluent in Gaelic.

3.4.4.3.4 "Mind you" Mr C says "if the Gaelic Unit hadn't started when it did I think we would have lost the battle. \_\_\_\_\_ started using English with her friends as soon as she went out to play."

3.4.4.3.5 When the child was nine months old Mr C began a Gaelic play-group ("well parent and toddler group really") in L'Institut Francais d'Ecosse, enlisting three or four other interested parents. Fionnlagh Mac Leòid came to visit the family on his way from a fact-finding visit to Wales: they convened a meeting in Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, inviting other parents running Gaelic play-groups in a few widely scattered communities; Mr C hastily wrote a constitution, and CNSA - Comhairle nan Sgoiltean Araich (the National Gaelic Play-group Association) - was born. Mr C acted as its secretary ("in those days nobody really got paid anything") and when their child was about to enter primary school the family removed to Inverness. Mr C now works as CNSA's administrative officer, from an office in the town. His wife has never worked full time, has always fitted her activities round their child.

3.4.4.3.6 "We could have settled in Glasgow just as well" Mr C says "but we wanted Gaelic-medium primary education for \_\_\_\_\_ - in Glasgow we were told it was to be 'bilingual' - that can mean anything". They have been entirely satisfied with the Unit. "Everyone remarks on how the children use Gaelic all the time in school - even with eachother, even in Primary One.

It seems to be something to do with the teacher. Associating Gaelic with such a nice person. It makes them want to speak it I think".

### 3.4.5 Mother only Gaelic-speaking

#### 3.4.5.1 Family "D"

3.4.5.1.1 This is a professional couple - both university graduates; Mrs D is a trained Gaelic teacher. Their two children were born in another Lowland city before the family moved to their present home when the children were aged eight and four respectively.

3.4.5.1.2 Mrs D spoke Gaelic only to D1 from birth and the child's Gaelic was well established by the age of three, when the mother became involved in the Gaelic play-group movement. Although there were older Gaelic-speaking women involved in the organisation of the play-group Mrs D feels herself to have been the only young mother really committed to speaking Gaelic to her own child - or indeed to the other children in the play-group. Mrs D says that at times she felt "like Big Brother. They would all look embarrassed and turn back to Gaelic again whenever I came into the room. They looked up to me to keep them right - I was supposed to teach them and organise them and there were never enough Gaelic mothers to make up a proper rota. It was quite a strain at the time. And \_\_\_\_\_ was hearing much more English by then and was beginning to answer me in English when I spoke in Gaelic. I began to wonder if I was doing the right thing at all".

3.4.5.1.3 It was one of the older Gaelic-speakers at the play-group who did most to undermine Mrs D's faith in what she was doing: "She said to me 'You should watch you don't spoil your relationship with \_\_\_\_\_, speaking

nothing but Gaelic. What a thing to say to anyone! I just felt I was doing everything wrong at the time anyway - I hadn't been very well - and that just put the tin lid on it."

3.4.5.1.4 When D2 was born the Mrs D spoke English to the baby, and was using both languages with the older child in an unsystematic way when I first met them. D1 (then seven) could understand most simple Gaelic communications, while D2 (then three) appeared to comprehend very little. When Mr D's work caused the family to remove to another city, Mrs D saw the existence of a Gaelic Primary Unit as the answer to the family's linguistic problems. Despite the fact that D1 was by then entering Primary Five, and was thoroughly established in mainstream English-medium education, the parents felt the child had enough residual knowledge of Gaelic to cope with the transition. D1 adapted quickly to the Unit and has been happy there, despite long bus journeys and the lack of classmates living locally. In conversation with me the child makes a big effort to speak Gaelic over all subject-areas - a more determined effort, perhaps, than any other child in the Unit. This may in part be due to having heard me speak Gaelic often to Mrs D, although her determination to persevere with the language has also been noted by the class teacher.

3.4.5.1.5 At the Gaelic Saturday Club ("Sradagan") the range of activities frequently demands extension of the children's linguistic repertoire to take in concepts not familiarised within the school context. Being naturally highly imaginative D1 frequently strays into unfamiliar areas, but is not to be deterred. If left, in mid-utterance, with no practical alternative to known English lexis, she accompanies the offending

item with a humorous pantomime of exasperation. On prompting, new lexis or construction is readily assimilated.

3.4.5.1.6 At time of writing D2 has spent one year of "Gaelic immersion" in the Unit. This child has not attended Gaelic play-group. Mrs D had felt unable to make the commitment of time and energy so soon after the upheaval of moving house. The Gaelic Unit was looked to to right the deficit: in the previous city no such facility had existed and the Gaelic play-group had presented the only opportunity for extending language-use. After a year in the Unit D2 appears to understand most simple Gaelic communications, but Gaelic production is minimal. Mrs D feels that in any case D2 is less communicative generally than D1 at a comparable age. The mother's communications with D2 are still predominantly in English, though liberally spliced with Gaelic endearments, and when she does use Gaelic with the child she habitually appends an English translation of what she has just said. The children speak only English together, except when they are playing schools, when D1 takes the rôle of teacher and uses Gaelic. (This pattern has been observed in many of the children, and underlines the strength of association between school and language.) Mrs D remarked on the amount and difficulty of the home-work D2 was bringing home ("in Primary One! Long Gaelic sentences to write out, and all the words have to be on the line. It's a lot to ask of a little one.") Mrs D feels that more emphasis might be put on the development of oral/aural skills at the early stages and less on the development of formal skills and that this might have been reflected in his School Report - which she thought was "a bit hard: you just want to encourage the wee souls at this stage, don't you?"

### 3.4.5.2 Family "E"

3.4.5.2.1 This case study is remarkable in that I was in regular contact with Mrs E and her family for several years - during which time she was aware that I was a Gaelic-speaker - before discovering that she was herself able to speak the language. This fact emerged, forcibly and to my considerable discomfiture, at a meeting of prospective Gaelic parents. Knowing only that she had been born and brought up in a village on the fringes of the traditional mainland "Gaidhealtachd" (where the native Gaelic of the district has long been in disuse) I had approached Mrs E to discover if she would be interested in Gaelic primary provision for her children. I introduced her to the meeting suggesting that, as she had no Gaelic, we should perhaps proceed in English. "Gu dè tha thu ciallachadh?" she protested in stentorian Lewis Gaelic. (She is a forthright and highly sociable character, voluble and extravert). I have since asked why she had never spoken Gaelic in my presence until this juncture, and she replied that she "simply had no idea. I just didn't." A "closet Gael" - she might never have "come out" had it not been for the change in her children's educational circumstances.

3.4.5.2.2 Mrs E's father and mother were native Gaelic-speakers from Lewis - a shipyard worker and a nurse - who came to Glasgow to seek employment in the late 1940's, then removed to South Argyll where Grandpa E worked on a farm. Mrs E and her brother were born and educated at the local school. Gaelic was the language of the home, and Mrs E says that she had very little English when she went to school. This does not appear to have presented her with any problems - it was a small community with strong

residual Gaelic memories. However the language remained confined to the home exclusively, and Mrs E remained illiterate in Gaelic. The family moved to Glasgow when Mrs E and her brother had completed their formal schooling - Mrs E taking up clerical work. She married a non-Gaelic speaker and the couple lived in Mrs E's parental home, where their two children were brought up hearing both Gaelic (from the grandparents) and English.

3.4.5.2.3 The grandparents moved back to Lewis when the children were in the early stages of primary education at the local school and it was shortly after this that Mrs E became involved in lobbying the Regional Council to establish a Gaelic school. Asked whether this involvement altered her policy as regards language use with her own children at the time Mrs E replied "Och no. We never really thought it would ever come off. We addressed hundreds of envelopes, but we never expected anything to happen." During this period Mrs E's "public" use of Gaelic gradually increased a little, though English remains very much the predominant language - at least within the contexts in which I have observed her. In formal meetings - still an unfamiliar context for most Gaelic-speakers anyway - Mrs E's contributions were always in English but demonstrated detailed comprehension of the - sometimes quite complex - proceedings. In social situations now she typically begins a sentence in Gaelic, then switches to English to complete the communication. Yet, she says, "I've never really spoken anything but Gaelic to my father and mother. My father isn't really very good in English. When he was down here in hospital recently they tried to make sure there was a Gaelic speaker shifted on to his ward - he gets irritated if he feels he's not making himself understood."



3.4.5.2.4 A year after the establishment of the Gaelic Unit Mrs E joined the staff as teaching auxiliary, and became an invaluable bridge between the two sections of the school (HMIS Report, 1988:1) speaking Gaelic to the children in the Unit without apparent sign of strain. When Gaelic was introduced into the related secondary school she joined an adult class within the school to study Higher Grade Gaelic, specifically in order to learn to read and write Gaelic. Her experience in this class, as described both by herself and by her teacher, is fascinating. She speedily became able to comprehend and/or translate complex written Gaelic - despite having professed herself unable even to guess at the simplest words in a read-over of a school pantomime script only a few months previously. (She overcame this by relying entirely on E2 to read the script aloud at home, and became "star" of the show!) Yet in the Gaelic class she still had difficulty in reading aloud and found it "entirely impossible" to write Gaelic. Her teacher was mystified and consulted other educationists - but without finding any practical short-term solution. After only one session in the class Mrs E scraped through the Preliminary Higher Examination "without" she insists "writing a word of Gaelic" - her pass-mark presumably deriving entirely from her Gaelic-English translations and her answers to questions in which English is the permitted mode. She found the experience nerve-racking, however, and did not sit the final examination.

3.4.5.3.5 As has already been seen, E1 and E2 had had a certain amount of language exposure in the home. However until the establishment of the Gaelic Unit their expectations were fairly low: enough "social Gaelic" to keep the grandparents happy on visits to Lewis, followed by academic study of the language at the local secondary school. The opportunity to acquire

fully bilingual skills, as offered by Gaelic-medium education, was extremely attractive to the family as a whole: one suspects, although she does not articulate this, that Mrs E wants to avoid her own history of linguistic inhibition and/or "passive bilingualism" repeating itself in her children. When the Unit was established E1 was about to enter Primary 6, E2 about to enter Primary 5. The younger child was accepted for the Unit, but E1 was adjudged to be too old to benefit. She was so disappointed that she begged to be allowed to repeat Primary 5 - a suggestion which was rejected after consultation with her class teacher: she is a very able pupil - was accepted two years later by a highly-selective, academically-orientated private school, whose entrance examination is notoriously stringent. She opted, however, to attend the local state high school "for the Gaelic" and has now completed two years in this school, winning the class Gaelic prize each year. She is making good progress in terms of Gaelic literacy, but is considerably less fluent than E2. Her mother reports that she feels somewhat isolated in her class, being the only pupil with a Gaelic background.

3.4.5.3.6 E2 now attends the secondary Gaelic Unit, has achieved well above average in all class examinations and is estimated by the Gaelic staff to be one of the most able pupils in terms both of literary and communicative skills. In conversation with me she has always used whatever linguistic resources she has at her disposal, having little inhibition about structural errors or lexical limitations. Her interest in related cultural areas (especially Highland history) is especially striking. When asked whether the girls use Gaelic with their contemporaries when on holiday in Lewis Mrs E replies: "No, only with their grandparents. The children in

Lewis don't speak Gaelic - not in our part (South Lochs) anyway. They answer you in English." When I ask E2 whether she uses Gaelic with her friends she replies "When we don't want other people to know what we're saying." The experience of these two sisters, so close in age, ability and non-school language experience, indicates that even three years' late-starting bilingual primary education can make a palpable difference in terms of communicative language skills, though there seems to be less disparity as regards literacy. The family is about to remove permanently to Lewis where, it is to be hoped, the children will increase their productive Gaelic skills rather than becoming inhibited by the presence of native speakers, as seems a real danger, if their mother's experience is anything to go by.

### 3.4.5.3 Family "F"

3.4.5.3.1 Mrs F has much in common with Mrs E. A nurse, born and brought up in Plockton, her mother is a native Gaelic speaker from Lewis, but her father does not speak the language. She remembers from her own childhood that she could "always understand every word of Gaelic" but has always invariably replied in English, even when on frequent holidays with her grandparents in Lewis, and after her maternal grandmother came to live permanently with the family on the mainland (when Mrs F was fourteen). When asked why she never spoke Gaelic she replies matter-of-factly "I couldn't pronounce the words and when I tried everyone laughed at me." She is rueful about what she perceives as the negative attitudes of native speakers at this time, and sees the Gaelic Unit which her own children now attend as an opportunity she wished she had had:

3.4.5.3.2 "It would have made all the difference to me. In school I did Gaelic to O-grade, which has been useful in helping the children with their homework, but it didn't leave me able to speak the language the way I would like. And now I am very careful not to discourage the children in any way when they try out their Gaelic. If they mix up the two languages, or say things wrong, I never correct them, as long as I can make out what they're saying. That's the most important thing isn't it. I think it's my own experience that has made me take this attitude so strongly."

3.4.5.3.3 Mr F is from the Borders and "didn't know anything about Gaelic" until he met his wife. However he was actively supportive when Mrs F became involved with the local Gaelic play-group ("he didn't have much

alternative!") - when for the first time she dared to use Gaelic: "the wee ones don't laugh at you". This play-group has been highly successful since its inception, apparently due to its situation in a relatively tight-knit community where a number of Gaelic-speaking women live as fairly close neighbours, several of them nursing (and having their babies) in the same hospital as Mrs F. However when a Gaelic Primary Unit was mooted Mr F was unsure. The older of the two children was well-settled in P2 of her local primary school, and her father felt that a move at that stage might be detrimental socially as well as educationally. Mrs F was more determined, but not without qualms - which were compounded when two of the other parents most involved in lobbying the local authority removed with their families to other parts of the country just as officials acceded to the demand for a Gaelic Unit.

3.4.5.3.4 "I sat here all that summer, after attending all those meetings, wondering if I'd done the right thing - if our two would end up in a class all by themselves. We worried about who the teacher would be as well. My husband insisted that if \_\_\_\_\_ wasn't happy we would take her straight back to her old school".

3.4.5.3.5 The children, now aged eight and six, settled in immediately to their new environment. Mrs F says there have been "absolutely no problems from the start". They were in a very small composite class (P 1 - 3). The supportive attitude of the Headteacher and other staff in the school has, she says "made a big difference" and the parents feel part of a cohesive group with common aims. They are encouraged to hold regular evening meetings in the school in order to overcome the potential communication

difficulties of a widely-scattered population. Mrs F cites the case of another family where the father (himself a Gaelic speaker) was initially strongly against removing his child from her local primary school: this man is now thoroughly involved in the life of the Unit, to the extent of standing for the School Board.

3.4.5.3.6 The children's communicative ability in Gaelic has progressed rapidly. Both children had attended Gaelic play-group, F1 from the age of three, F2 from eighteen months. The elder child, Mrs F says, "gives me a row if I don't speak Gaelic to them." She says F2 has completely forgotten the English for "tapadh leat" ("thank you") which he uses consistently, even to restaurant staff if the family eats out, and uses several words in Gaelic for which he knows no English equivalent - e.g. names of animals and birds which the children have learned in the school context. He mixes Gaelic words in English conversation, though he knows their English equivalents. When speaking together the children still use English predominantly, but with Gaelic words intruding frequently; when addressed in Gaelic by an adult they consistently reply in Gaelic.

3.4.5.3.7 Mrs F has little doubt that the children will be completely functional bilinguals by the time their primary schooling ends. She is somewhat concerned about their secondary schooling, however, feeling that parental cohesion and/or motivation may not be strong enough to keep the children together at this stage. There may, she feels, be more pressure on parents to make choices based on religious and academic factors rather than on the continuation of bilingual education beyond the primary. This she

feels would be considerably to the detriment of what has already been achieved.

3.4.5.3.8 Mr F professes himself as satisfied as his wife with his children's progress in the Gaelic Unit. F2 is trying hard to teach his father some Gaelic words, though shift-work makes it impossible for Mr F to contemplate attending Gaelic classes. "He wouldn't do it anyway. He's too thrawn".

### 3.4.6 Father only Gaelic speaking

#### 3.4.6.1 Family "G"

3.4.6.1.1 Mr and Mrs G live in Glasgow with their two children, G1 (aged eight) and G2 (aged 3). G1 has attended the Gaelic Unit in Sir John Maxwell School since Primary One.

3.4.6.1.2 Mr G is a professional man whose job makes heavy demands as regards time spent away from home, long office hours, etc. By the time he comes home in the evening his two children are almost invariably asleep and often his wife is too. Therefore his contact with the children is largely confined to a short time every morning, during which he makes a conscious effort to speak Gaelic with the children, go over G1's Gaelic homework, discuss "things relating to school" and so on. He suggests that this arrangement is not without its advantages, as the brevity of his contact concentrates his efforts to compensate for his absence at other times. He is a native Gaelic speaker from the Inner Isles - has never spoken English to his own parents, and maintained his Gaelic throughout secondary school on the mainland, despite a distinctly un-Gaelic ethos in the school itself, through contact with other Gaelic-speakers living in the same school hostel as himself. Similarly at University he made no attempt to join Highland or Gaelic Societies, but was never short of Gaelic-speaking companions with whom to converse informally.

3.4.6.1.3 Mrs G is a housewife, originally from Eire, who learned Irish Gaelic at school. She was "pretty fluent" by the time she left secondary school but has had little opportunity to use the language since living in



Scotland. Her parents are not Irish-speaking. Her father left school at twelve, having learned a certain amount of Irish as a compulsory element of primary education, but Mr and Mrs G feel that his attitude may have been negatively affected subsequently by the difficulty of acquiring employment at that time without fluency in Irish: this has been seen by many as having been a counter-productive stricture, causing more resentment than motivation. However the maternal grand-parents are fairly supportive, albeit passively, of Mr and Mrs G's attempts to raise their children bilingually. When first married, Mr and Mrs G set an hour aside every day for speaking Gaelic, and Mr G "reckons it wouldn't take much to turn his wife into a fluent Scottish Gaelic speaker". However when G1 arrived the couple discovered that there was little time left in the day to maintain Mrs G's "lessons" and she has had no time since in which to attend formal classes (their third child is now on the way). There seems to have been no question of Irish Gaelic becoming the language of the home, although Mr G does speak some Irish.

3.4.6.1.4 Mr G contrasts his own situation with that of his brother - whose relatively regular hours have allowed him more time with his family, and whose wife and children have become considerably more fluent in Gaelic than Mrs G and G1 and 2. However he points out that personality also plays a large part in language acquisition, and believes that his sister-in-law's University training has given her an added advantage in learning another language. Also his brother lives in a city where the Gaelic-speaking community is more cohesive: this has allowed his niece and nephew to attend Gaelic play-group in preparation for Gaelic-medium primary education, a process which Mr G is sure has made a considerable difference to their

acquisition, and to his sister-in-law's confidence in using the language with the children. Mrs G does not drive, so has not been able to take part in a Gaelic play-scheme.

3.4.6.1.5 G1's out-of-school Gaelic input, therefore, is largely confined to half an hour in the morning when her father is at home (although her mother makes an effort to read with her in the evening) and to Saturday mornings when her father usually takes her out, with Gaelic as their sole language of communication. Mr G feels that the little girl speaks Gaelic with a greater degree of comfort when the two are alone together, although he says that his wife has at no time given any hint of discouragement or feelings of exclusion when he talks Gaelic with the children in her presence. He thinks perhaps G1 associates the language so strongly with her father that her mother's presence creates an inhibition so subtle as to be unrecognised.

3.4.6.1.6 When G1 began school she was collected by taxi at 7.45 a.m. and delivered at 4.45 p.m. or later. This meant that she was permanently tired - but despite this she progressed well and was happy at school. Her Gaelic acquisition was swift during her first year, when Gaelic immersion was practised in school. I recorded conversations with her after only three weeks in immersion, in which she was already comprehending most everyday conversation and replying in sentences where both lexis and construction were mixed: e.g. "No, no, I do not want mo chàta dùinte-ed" and "We've got a beibidh ùr againn". When I spoke to her again towards the end of her first year there was much less interference, and although there is no doubt that she is still more fluent in English there seems no distinction between

her attitude towards the two languages, she is equally comfortable conversing in either, and is obviously highly motivated to speak Gaelic as much as possible. As Mr G puts it "she is very proud of being able to speak Gaelic". They recently joined the local library, and G2 went, entirely on her own initiative, to enquire at the desk as to what Gaelic books were available (unfortunately the answer was "none").

3.4.6.1.7 However, as regards the overall continuum of her linguistic progress, Mr G feels that it demonstrated a levelling off when bilingual teaching methods were substituted for the earlier Gaelic-only policy. While accepting that the teachers have had difficulties as regards shortage of resources he feels personally that there was no advantage in the introduction of English reading during the second year of the primary school process:

3.4.6.1.8 "\_\_\_\_\_ taught herself to read English no bother anyway, but it's not so easy to keep up the Gaelic in today's world."

3.4.6.1.9 Although he had heard other people complaining about the difficulty of raising children bilingually he did not completely appreciate this until he had children of his own. He had assumed that, in the Unit, Gaelic would be used almost entirely to the exclusion of English for the first three or four years and therefore that the school would be sufficient to maintain the language; he now regrets having left so much of the responsibility for linguistic development to the school. When he realised how much G1's linguistic progress was affected by the introduction of bilingual teaching he began to make a far greater and more consistent

effort to compensate, and has been punctilious in speaking nothing but Gaelic at all times to G2, a policy to which he had not adhered strictly when G1 was a toddler. As he says, disarmingly, "I always used English to tell her off. I didn't want her to have bad associations with Gaelic. Now I see this might come across as doing the important things in English and I make no distinctions between my use of different languages in different situations with \_\_\_\_\_ (G2). I want him to become completely used to hearing Gaelic only, at least from me. It's all so much to do with habit. Once they start using English at school that connection is gone."

3.4.6.1.9 The family hopes that Mrs G may pass her driving test in time for G2 to attend Gaelic play-group, but it is a race against time - and the fast-growing G3. Meanwhile G2 is naturally a more active child than G1, so he has "very little language input apart from the Gaelic children's television programmes": G1 was much more willing, for example, to sit down and read Gaelic stories with either parent. In general both parents are well pleased with G1's progress in the Gaelic Unit, but worry that the "pleasure" which she demonstrates in speaking Gaelic will be hard to maintain as the child grows towards adolescence, in the absence of videos, television, comics, etc. Already G1 watches "everything and anything" on television from the moment she arrives home from school, and the parents feel this is an insidious process which it is hard to overcome, especially where the family has so little time "to be a family" and where the children have relatively little contact with their Gaelic-speaking father. "We are, I suppose, fairly atypical from that point of view" he says.

#### 3.4.6.2 Family "H"

3.4.6.2.1 Family H consists of Mrs H, a housewife, Mr H, a skilled manual worker, H 1, 2 and 3, aged thirteen, ten and eight respectively. H2 and 3 attend the Gaelic Unit in Sir John Maxwell Primary School, Glasgow; H1 attends the related Gaelic Unit in Hillpark Secondary. Mrs H has faithfully attended school and school-related meetings, and has been supportive, in practical ways, of the life of the Gaelic Unit.

3.4.6.2.2 Mr H is a native Gaelic speaker from Lewis; his wife was born in Skye but has no Gaelic. She attributes this to her mother's lack of fluency: "my grandparents only used Gaelic when they didn't want the children to know what they were saying". She remarks, however, that some of her siblings speak the language but says she "has no idea when or where they picked it up". Mrs H commenced school in Skye. The family settled in Glasgow when Mrs H was twelve, and she has lived there ever since. She would like to be able to speak Gaelic, and attended a parents' Gaelic class for a year "but couldn't make anything of it at all." She thinks this was due to her age and wishes she had had the opportunities her sons are now enjoying.

3.4.6.2.3 The parents' reasons for enrolling their children in the Gaelic Unit were not, however, entirely, or perhaps even primarily, based on their desire for them to become bilingual. When the Gaelic Unit was established H1 and 2 were attending their local school - a primary with a far higher than average proportion of Asian pupils in relation to most other schools in Glasgow. Five years ago, Mrs H points out, there were only one or two

non-Asians per class: "When the kids were at the nursery none of the mothers I knew were thinking of sending their children to \_\_\_\_\_ Primary. \_\_\_\_\_ (H2) wasn't doing very well there at all. When the Gaelic Unit started it was just what we wanted". And, she continues divertingly, "his English improved straight away when he went to the Gaelic Unit".

3.4.6.2.4 The children's general progress at school continues to please their parents, although, they say, the boys make no attempt at any time to speak Gaelic to one another. When I address them in Gaelic they understand readily, but reply consistently in English, showing signs of discomfiture if pressed to speak Gaelic - but perhaps they would be discomfited being pressed to talk to an embarrassing middle-aged lady in any language.... Mrs H says that she frequently upbraids her husband for not speaking Gaelic to the children (when he is at home: he works away from Glasgow a great deal). However the boys say they cannot understand their father's Gaelic:

3.4.6.2.5 "He talks too fast for them. I tell him that - that he should try and speak more slowly. But even if he tries to slow down it doesn't make much difference. He says they're getting a different kind of Gaelic in school from the kind he speaks. He even tried to go over their poem for the Mòd with them but that was no good. The teacher had given them a different way of pronouncing the words from his way. And he uses different words from the teacher for lots of things. They just end up fighting, the lot of them".

3.4.6.2.6 Nevertheless both parents are well satisfied with their decision to send the boys to the Gaelic Unit. They have had consistently good

reports and have enjoyed the extra-curricular cultural activities relating to Gaelic. The general educational progress of the children seems to be a far higher priority than their linguistic acquisition - and the parents see their educational attainment as having been far better than it would have been had they continued at the local school.

### 3.4.6.3 Family "I"

3.4.6.3.1 The "I" family have two children, aged 13 and 8 respectively. The elder entered Sir John Maxwell Gaelic Unit in P5, in 1985; her sister entered the first full P1 "immersion" class in 1986. The first is now at secondary school - attending the Gaelic Unit in Hillpark School, while the younger is in a P4 "bilingual" class.

3.4.6.3.2 Mr I is a taxi-driver, Mrs I a housewife; the family lives in a large modern Council estate in the vicinity of the secondary school.

3.4.6.3.3 Mr I has learned Gaelic in his spare time - first took I2 to the South Side Gaelic play-group when she was two: he made a point of staying at the play-group, trying out his rudimentary Gaelic and "generally getting in the road" of the three nonplussed ladies from South Uist who ran it. This year he passed Higher Gaelic, and was pressed into attending the Cearcall youth-club summer camp as a Glasgow parental chaperone and helper. He agreed to this reluctantly, feeling his communicative ability fell far short of the minimum requirements for useful contribution to a predominantly native-speaker event. He transpired to be a most valuable aide, used his learned Gaelic with more and more confidence as the week progressed, and has volunteered to run a week's course in Gaelic-medium conjuring at next year's camp: "I'll need to start preparing myself now" he said excitedly, alighting from the bus - referring, it turned out, not to sleight of hand: "I'll need to work out all the vocabulary and practise the grammar. I'll need to get it word-perfect".



3.4.6.3.4 His interest in Gaelic appears to puzzle both himself and his wife: he has a Gaelic-sounding name, but no Gaelic connections that he knows of; the family goes on holiday to stay with relations in a relatively recently Gaelic-speaking part of the North-east, but neither his relations nor anyone in the community speak Gaelic today. He and his wife were both born in Glasgow and have lived there all their lives. His wife views his obsession with affectionate good humour. She has made no attempt to learn the language ("I wouldn't be any good at it. I'm no use at languages. But I like to hear \_\_\_\_\_ and the children using it in the house. I might pick up a phrase or two, but that would be it"). She was, however, "less than delighted" when her husband announced that I1 was to leave her present primary school and enrol in Sir John Maxwell Gaelic Unit. "He was adamant" she says. "I told him 'she can go for a term, and if she doesn't like it, or if she doesn't get on O.K. that's it! She's out, Gaelic or no!'"

3.4.6.3.5 In the event I1 was extremely happy in the Gaelic Unit. The exercise stimulated her father into making more use of Gaelic with both children in the home, though periods of shift-working make his contact with them more sporadic than he would like. I2's Gaelic has progressed much more obviously than I1's since her period of immersion, though Mr I feels one year is far too short: "They're just getting going and they're into the bilingual situation. I'd be happy if they never got English at all - just their reading maybe. But they can hear English any time, read English books and watch English telly. English isn't the problem - Gaelic's the problem. It's taken me years to learn Gaelic and I still can't speak it the way I'd like. I don't want them to have to go through all that if they can pick it

up naturally. If you'd seen the difference that year made to \_\_\_\_ (I2). I just wish \_\_\_\_ (I1) had had that year".

3.4.6.3.6 Recently the Education Officer of Comunn a Gàidhlig asked Mrs I to accompany her to Tìree, to address a meeting on behalf of non-Gaelic speaking Gaelic Unit parents. "I don't know why you want me to do it" she demurred "I've never been on a plane in my life, never mind a platform". However, she agreed, and more than earned the plane-ticket by her performance from the platform. Tìree parents had already been visited in their homes, had heard the arguments in favour of bilingual education, had agreed that it sounded attractive in principle but were worried about its implementation in practice - especially those with no Gaelic, who wondered whether their children would be at a disadvantage compared to those with Gaelic-speaking parents - wondered, indeed, if Comunn na Gàidhlig were to be trusted on a subject as important as their own children's education.

3.4.6.3.7 "When my husband told me he was putting our daughter into a Gaelic Unit I nearly died" she began. "Well that was four years ago and I've never regretted it for a moment...."

3.4.6.3.8 The Education Officer sat back and left her to it....

### 3.4.7 Neither parent Gaelic-speaking

#### 3.4.7.1 Family "J"

3.4.7.1.1 The J family have three children, aged seven, five and three respectively, the elder two children attending a city Gaelic Unit. Mr J is a disabled ex-serviceman of Irish extraction, his wife, an Englishwoman, works part-time. Mrs J has attended a parents' Gaelic class for a year; Mr J hopes to attend "in rotation" - it is impossible for them to attend together. Meanwhile he has been studying Gaelic from tapes, books, broadcasts etc.

3.4.7.1.2 Mr J's interest in Gaelic springs from a life-long absorption with history. His mother (from Northern Ireland) was an Irish speaker, but his father (a British soldier from Eire) forbade the use of Irish in the family home. However Mr J picked up a few words of Irish Gaelic before his mother died, when he was nine. He was first aware of Celtic history in the songs he heard from his parents: this stimulated his boyhood interest, although he "didn't know how to go about finding out more". As he grew up he became more and more absorbed in historical research, becoming increasingly aware that the history of the Celtic peoples was written "from the Anglo-Saxon point of view". He left home at fifteen to join the army, but continued with his research, seeking out archaeological sites - stone circles in Ireland, Wales and Scotland, and on the continent, where he was stationed for a while. On leaving the army he returned to Germany to work and became a "fairly fluent" German speaker. This further stimulated his interest in languages.

3.4.7.1.3 Mrs J's family background has given her a deep interest in history also - and in cultural pluralism. Her father founded and ran a museum and heritage centre in the Lake District, and was instrumental in making his family aware of their own background: "he is the sort of person who takes lots of time to explain things to his children and grandchildren: a very patient, caring sort of man." Mrs J is one-quarter Chinese: her paternal grandfather married a Chinese girl and Mrs J has learned some Cantonese. The J's maintain close links with the Chinese side of the family, celebrate the Chinese New Year, and have introduced their children to Chinese culture. Mrs J's sister spent a year at University in Beijing recently, which further stimulated the family's interest in this part of their heritage.

3.4.7.1.4 Since before their marriage the J's have spent all their spare time as members of historical re-enactment societies. Such activities in the main took place in England, and so in 1984 the couple founded their own society in Scotland, concentrating at first on the Viking and Celtic periods, but, more recently, extending their activities to the (Scottish) Wars of Independence. Their preparatory research is thorough, taking account of social and political background as well as the more practical factors (costume, terrain, tactical detail etc) needed to enact battles and other historical events. Their members include teachers, media and medical people, and Mr J points out that their findings often have relevance to the work of archaeologists, cartographers etc. Since they began their study of Gaelic the J's have been able to assist the 'Ordnance Survey in utilising Gaelic place-names to pinpoint the exact location of minor geographical features, historical sites etc.

3.4.7.1.5 They find, however, that their most useful function is to heighten the historical awareness of ordinary people: "in Scotland we are years behind other countries in appreciating our own background - seeing history from the point of view of Scotland and the Scots". They find, however, that they do not always win the whole-hearted support of local authorities, tourist boards etc. This is in marked contrast to the support of similar bodies for parallel activities in England and Wales, who have been quick to see the positive tourist (and other) potential of such activities and are usually ready with sponsorship. The J's feel that there is some official resistance in Scotland to any exercise "designed to raise the national consciousness" - a situation they find ironic, as their activities are carefully and responsibly designed to give maximum historical accuracy and communal involvement, not to be in any way inflammatory or antagonistic.

3.4.7.1.6 Their oldest child, J1, is "completely at home in Gaelic". She teaches her younger brother and sister Gaelic songs and rhymes, talks Gaelic to them, and reads to them in Gaelic. Her young sister, J2, is now in P1 of the Gaelic Unit, and she is already (after a few weeks in school) beginning to do the same. The pre-school child counts in Gaelic by choice. The children's choice of music reflects their interest in Gaelic, and their parents have been careful to introduce no element of coercion in this: Mr J says his children are "proud to be able to do something - to speak a language - that makes them complete and binds them together, with the family and with their background. That's it - it's a binding thing."

3.4.7.1.7 The children have spent much time in the company of their parents' historical society friends, and this group is now becoming increasingly aware of Gaelic language and culture - ask the children to teach them words and phrases and so on, which the children are proud to supply.

3.4.7.1.8 Their English grandparents are very impressed by the children's educational programme, and also like to try out phrases the children bring to them. Mr J thinks the Chinese background has a lot to do with the close-knit family support - "the elders in the family are given respect and love. We are trying to make the picture complete for our children - language, culture, history...." He praises the attitudes of the teachers in the Gaelic Unit: says her teacher has remarked that J1 has developed "a wee Highland accent all of her own - not the teacher's dialect at all - she has never forced anything, just let \_\_\_\_\_ develop at her own rate".

3.4.7.1.9 Mr J says that when they took J2 to visit the Unit for the first time they met up with many other new parents who were themselves non-Gaelic speaking. "They had some of the initial uncertainties that we had - and we were able to reassure them, and say that this time last year we felt like you..."

3.4.7.1.10 He is somewhat disparaging of the attitudes of some native Gaelic speakers towards learners like themselves. He does not find it easy to speak Gaelic, and had hoped to be able to find people willing to help overcome this. But he has found many Gaelic speakers to be "clannish" - a residue of people who are less than communicative with learners: "It's as

if they can't see the point in people like us trying to learn, they want to know why on earth we're bothering. When I was at the Mòd with \_\_\_\_\_ I tried to strike up a conversation with a man at a table, but he was impatient. That just makes you more nervous, more self-conscious. It reminded me of the people in Germany who want you to speak *hoch Deutsch* - who correct you all the time. I feel like saying there's only 9,000 of you Gaelic speakers left in this part of the world and not all of you can even read and write it. At least I can do that. If it wasn't for people like us Gaelic would die out. Well I don't see why Gaelic should die out - why children should be forced away from their own culture, even forced to go away and live elsewhere like I was. That's why we send our children to the Gaelic Unit. To make them complete. To make them want to stay - to be able to stay."

### 3.4.7.2 The "K" family

3.4.7.2.1 The K's have two children, K1, aged 13, at Hillpark Secondary Gaelic Unit, and K2, aged 10, at Sir John Maxwell Primary Gaelic Unit. Mr K is a retired policeman, Mrs K works in a supermarket.

3.4.7.2.2 Mr K's mother is a Gaelic speaker, born and brought up in Glasgow of Island parentage. His grandparents spoke Gaelic to Mr K when he was a youngster on holiday in Lewis, but, he says cheerfully, he was "too bloody thick" to pick the language up. Granny K is still alive and living in Glasgow, and is pleased that her grandchildren are learning the language. However, Mr K finds that her influence can be "disruptive": "Their Gaelic doesn't always meet with her approval. She speaks the old Gaelic and she sometimes criticises the girls for the vocabulary they learn in school. The other night we sat and argued all evening about whether they ought to say '*cathair*' instead of '*seithir*'. However K1 and 2 spend a lot of time on holiday in Lewis, where their grand-uncles are less critical. "They're knocked out by it all. \_\_\_\_\_ (K2) spent hours on end sitting on the back of a barrow this summer blethering away in Gaelic to my old uncle, who's in his nineties."

3.4.7.2.3 Mrs K has no Gaelic connections, and Mr K says she was unenthusiastic when Mr K told her the girls were going to go to the Gaelic Unit: "I read about it in the press when it started, and I was straight onto the phone to get them in. It's part of their national heritage - it's an ability they ought to have. I ought to have had it, but I missed out. If it had just been a Gaelic class once a week or even once a day I wouldn't



have considered it - just the grammar and syntax. What attracted me was that the whole environment was to be Gaelic."

3.4.7.2.4 His wife's concern mainly related to the fact that both children were happily settled in (and "dedicated to") their local primary, a considerable distance from the Gaelic Unit. She somewhat reluctantly agreed to the older girl enrolling on the first day of term, but made "all sorts of excuses" to keep her younger child at the local primary: "She said \_\_\_\_\_'s birthday was just coming up and we shouldn't take her away from her school friends before that. In the end the wee one went the Monday after her birthday - a week after her sister started - when the wife ran out of excuses."

3.4.7.2.5 Neither parents has had any regrets about the move. Both have become extremely involved in the life of the school. They feel the girls have been happy, and they have had the advantage of much extra-mural cultural experience: "\_\_\_\_\_ (K1) has gained lots more confidence through being in the Unit. All the teachers in Hillpark remark about their group. It's as if they've been - how can I put it - hand-groomed - they have had so many extra opportunities and involvement, which has given them an added maturity. In her old school \_\_\_\_\_ was completely middle-of-the-road as far as attainment was concerned. But in Hillpark she's had nothing but straight A's and a couple of B's for all her subjects. It's been an added spin-off to the linguistic thing. \_\_\_\_\_ (K2) has always been more extravert, but her sister is shy - there's no doubt at all she's benefitted from her education and going to the Mòd, the drama performances and everything else. It's hard to describe what makes them seem special, the

children from the Unit - it's as if these injections of culture have given them some sort of 'Highland gentlemanliness' if that makes any sense."

3.4.7.2.6 As regards their linguistic development the K's feel that K1 has "done as well as she could in the limited time" (she was in Primary Five when the Unit was established). They feel, however, that K2's faster progress reflects her more extravert character as much as, if not more than, her earlier start in the Unit: "it's harder to get the older one motivated to use Gaelic - she's the sort that would just sit quietly whatever the language". However they consider that both children would have made more progress if the Unit had been organised upon slightly different lines - especially if the girls had been immersed in Gaelic for a longer period of time: "That disappointed us: we had understood that they would all be immersed until they were able to use the language in different situations. Also \_\_\_\_\_ (K1) would maybe have been better off if she had been in a class of complete beginners all together - she found it a bit inhibiting being in with other children who could already speak some Gaelic".

3.4.7.2.7 The K's feel very strongly that the future of the Unit (and of all such Units) depends upon their being properly represented on the School Boards (shortly to be elected). Mr K is standing for the Board himself: he says that when the girls first came to the Unit the family felt very strongly that it would be better if the two halves of the school were kept as separate as possible - to create a completely Gaelic atmosphere and environment in the Unit, as autonomous as possible: "But that didn't seem to be possible at the time - there was so much talk of integration, and

some parents were anxious to play down the differences to help the children to settle in. I still think that's maybe a pity. We've lost out in some ways. But if we're going to be part of the whole school - and that's how it has turned out - we have to stand for the school board not as representatives of the Unit, but as representatives of the whole school. That's what I shall be doing. A member of the whole school, but with a vested interest in the Gaelic Unit. If we're not properly represented it could be disastrous in the future."

### 3.4.7.3 Family "L"

3.4.7.3.1 Mr and Mrs L are both professional people - both involved in the creative arts/media. Neither has any Gaelic family connection, though Mrs L "is a Cameron on my mother's side" and Mr L's parents introduced him to some aspects of Scottish "culture" - in a manner, it seems, more conducive of alienation than of lasting interest. He did, however, acquire a sense that there were more valuable, less superficial, aspects of national cultural identity to which neither his home environment nor the educational system gave him access. Mrs L is the daughter of a Russian Jewish emigré, brought up in a non-orthodox family which maintained close and valuable links with its European past - and present: widely traveled and fluent in several modern languages, Mrs L has a personal vision which embraces cultural and linguistic pluralism and educational liberalism: she sees the growth of interest in Gaelic as part of an "unstoppable process", reflected in and hastened by impending full EC membership.

3.4.7.3.2 The family's interest in Gaelic culture was stimulated by holidays to an Inner Hebridean island rich in ancient monuments and with its Gaelic-speaking roots still evident among older members of the community. The speed with which the language is disappearing among younger members of the community concerned and saddened the L's, as did the general decline in child-population at the time. They took the unusual step of upgrading their involvement from "passing tourist" to "adopted islander" status by renting accommodation and enrolling their own children in the local one-teacher school for a term - a measure designed to widen their

horizons and enrich their educational experience. During this time the children acquired a certain amount of Gaelic, became deeply involved in local community-based projects and were introduced to their first local Mod - in whose prize-list they featured, somewhat to the discomfiture of the L's, not to mention the part-irritation, part-grudging-admiration of the locals. Since then the family has taken steps to acquire a permanent "second home" on the island, and now spend large and regular portions of their - frenetically busy - lives in the community.

3.4.7.3.3 The family had some qualms about their local primary school, in which, they felt, opportunities for cultural enrichment were not fully realised: the school has a very high proportion of Asian families, and this, the L's felt, should have presented an ideal context for mutual enlightenment and heightened cultural and linguistic awareness. However in practice the approach seemed rather to be one of cultural subtraction for the Asian children, taught along fairly unimaginative traditionalist lines by a staff of overwhelmingly "non-Asian" origin - a context in which the existence of different languages seemed more a nuisance, a threat (at least temporary) to English literacy rather than a vital school resource on which to capitalise; the celebration of Id and the baking of chappattis seemed condescending tokenism to the L's. When a Gaelic Unit was established in a primary school near their city home, the L's had little hesitation in enrolling their children. L1 was then 9 (entering P5); L2 was 7 (entering P3); L3 had not yet been born.

3.4.7.3.4 When L3 was born (1986) the L's advertised for a full-time Gaelic-speaking "mother's help". They were fortunate in attracting a

sensitive and capable young woman from Barra, who has pursued a policy of Gaelic usage with all three children and who has been able to act *in loco* (*Gaelic-speaking*) *parentis* when required - on the Gaelic play-group and Sradagan youth-club rotas for example. The L's themselves have been more involved in the life of the Gaelic Unit than their busy family and professional lives might reasonably permit, though feeling at the same time that their own inability to speak Gaelic may have constituted an inappropriate bar to full participation in some support contexts in the past. While acknowledging the importance of Gaelic-speaking parental representation, they feel that the contribution of non-Gaelic speaking parents is equally important, their special needs equally compelling and their influence equally potent. Mrs L, for instance, has been instrumental in making and maintaining useful contacts with agencies as disparate as the local Community Education Department, sources of sponsorship in the private sector, and the press; she has helped organise a parents' Gaelic class; she has been a member of the whole-school PTA, and has taught drama on a voluntary basis within the "English" section of the school.... Mr L has recently become elected to the School Board, though unhappy, in the short term, about the implications of this form of administration and suspicious of its underlying intentionality in the long-term.

3.4.7.3.5 While expressing reservations about some aspects of the education on offer in the Gaelic Unit - it will be a rare school which will come up to Mrs L's exacting standards in terms of general organisation and stimulating teaching, a rare teacher who will mirror her own creative and imaginative approach to living - the family seem happy with their choice. The children's linguistic development has been steady within the Unit,

their Gaelic accent is faultless, and their comprehension reliable, although both reflect the Unit's apparently endemic tendency towards passive rather than productive skills, literacy rather than oracy in Gaelic despite the relative advantages they have enjoyed, in comparison with many of their class-mates, as regards extra-curricular linguistic input. L1 is learning the bagpipes, L2 the clàrsach, and both have played key rôles in musical and dramatic Unit productions. Mr and Mrs L have been consistently averse to any measures which might heighten tension within the school or deprive the majority in the anglophone section of opportunities to benefit from the existence of a specialist Unit within their school: if measures of this type were deemed necessary to heighten linguistic opportunities for the Gaelic Unit it would be, they believe, a poor bargain ultimately.

### 3.4.5 Summary

3.4.5.1 The above twelve families were chosen fairly randomly, within the following parameters:

3.4.5.1.1 (a) the basic criterion as regards Gaelic fluency (with both native and L2 Gaelic-speakers represented within each of the relevant categories)

3.4.5.1.2 (b) the representation of as many as possible of the urban GU's (within the constraints of the researcher's long-term and/or in-depth knowledge of parents and children concerned)

3.4.5.1.3 (c) representation of contrastive cross-generational and/or inter-familial data

3.4.5.1.4 (d) the representation of parents of varying socio-economic status within each of the four basic categories.

3.4.5.2 The latter proved more elusive than had been expected. One becomes aware of a sense of "classlessness" among GU parents (or, perhaps, of relationships, interests, attributes, aspirations and attitudes which combine to transcend stereotypes) by no means confined to the present sample. Thus the joiner's wife is a trained nutritionist whose brother is a Professor; the double-Honours graduate is a housewife who undertakes occasional home-knitting contracts while her engineer husband works in



Gaelic administration; the taxi-driver and the ex-soldier work constantly to improve themselves academically; the television producer's wife is a make-up artiste, the ex-police-man's wife progresses via the supermarket check-out into the hotel trade and onto the Children's Panel; the ex-filing-clerk becomes a teaching auxiliary; the singer becomes (hopefully) a Doctor of Philosophy; a totally disabled father-of-six with no higher educational background spends his time in the Mitchell Library reading up on applied linguistics; a practising primary teacher is married to a drummer, brother of a world-famous rock musician; one husband commutes sixty miles to work so that his children can attend a Gaelic Unit while another commutes weekly between Glasgow and London - and yet another awaits Her Majesty's pleasure; the fire-man changes shifts to attend *Sradagan* committee meetings and drive the Gaelic play-bus; the Modern Language teacher offers to teach judo through the medium of Gaelic when she has a spare moment, the telephonist from South Uist's husband raises money for Gaelic by running up Ben Nevis, the quiet lady from Barra is a theatrical costumier, the Lewisman is married to the daughter of an Irish film editor.

3.4.5.3 Some juxtapositions were deliberate: thus two families were chosen for their highly contrasting reactions to the same local primary school with its predominantly Asian population - two for their personal involvement in the establishment of Comhairle nan Sgoiltean Araich. Two families illustrate linguistic loss 'among older siblings, ironically placed in *English* nursery schools to overcome their perceived linguistic deficit, while younger members now become bilingual through Gaelic-medium education - in turn highlighting the strides which Gaelic education has

made within a surprisingly short time (though the bilingual child who gave up speaking Gaelic to "be like the rest" in one Unit represents a worrying factor: one would hope that such children, all too rare in urban GU's, would become a positive asset in terms of linguistic input, and cherish their own position as linguistic "models" as in the Culver City Project of 2.5.34.2, above). Two mothers represent a generation of essentially non-productive bilingualism which might have spelled the end of Gaelic in their respective families without the timely introduction of Gaelic pre- and primary-school education: unsupported, the presence of such passive bilinguals may well distort census figures without adding anything more than statistics to the global language picture - once established it is a hard pattern to reverse: unlike complete beginners they cannot risk making mistakes, and so avoid using the language altogether. Meanwhile, on the one hand, fluent Gaelic-speaking parents who gave up trying to raise bilingual families before the establishment of Gaelic primary education, worrying about the consequences of their isolated attempts but guilty about the subsequent "cop-out", compromising by using both Gaelic and English unsystematically - far from optimum practice, (cf Ronjat, 1913); on the other hand parents who succeeded with no support from the official system - or the couple who learned Gaelic in time to speak it to their child and braved interpretation as eccentrics.

3.4.5.4 Some themes emerged unelicited but not unpredictably: the desire to regain lost cultural heritage however close or distant the relationship - not harnessed overtly by any interviewees to Scottish Nationalism in a political sense, but rather to a sense of cultural anomie; impatience with an education system which is not perceived to provide Scots children with a

more secure sense of self-identity; conversely, exasperation with Gaelic speakers who are seen to be less than helpful in their attitudes towards L2 learners (perceived severally as impatience, or exclusivity, or purism) - a syndrome for which the Gaelic speaker seems by no means entirely to blame, given the general availability of English and the historically low status of Gaelic, but which must be tackled if the language is to be maintained. Other themes emerged unexpectedly: negative reactions to compulsory Irish education among two separate sets of grandparents, contrasting with the positive response of their grandchildren to optional, perhaps more stimulating Scottish Gaelic programmes; even more exotic mixed ancestry among some parents, correlating with heightened cultural awareness and a desire to relate strongly with Scottish Gaelic culture.

3.4.5.5 Collectively these families - with their disparate circumstances and common aspirations - may be seen to illustrate many of the hypotheses (historical, linguistic and cultural) raised in the first two chapters of the present thesis (sections 1 and 2, above). As individual studies they remind constantly of the domestic and personal exigencies which create the conditions whereby consistent extra-scholastic Gaelic input becomes difficult, even where both parents are bilingual (cf section 3.3, above). As Arnberg (1987: 7) puts it:

3.4.5.5.1 "Raising children bilingually is not an easy task. Many parents are unprepared for this fact and when the expected positive results are not achieved, they may place the blame on themselves or on their children".

3.4.5.6 As teachers themselves become more secure within the Gaelic-medium frame-work it would seem that they may play an important rôle in encouraging parents (both native-speakers and learners) to use Gaelic in the home and socially - which in turn cannot but be of benefit to their own work within the Gaelic Units. This is a point which has been somewhat obscured, perhaps, by the rôle played by parents in lobbying for the establishment of such Units: teachers may in fact miss distress signals through feeling pressurised, or even threatened, by such parents, whose enthusiasm and/or Gaelic "credentials" may obscure their own insecurities and the very considerable differences in attitude, aptitude and linguistic exposure which may occur even among siblings and in turn give parents and teachers unfair expectations of some children. The present study consistently confirmed de Jong's findings:

3.4.5.6.1 "At some of the interviews I did, parents would begin or end the conversation by commenting that of course it all depended on the children themselves. They would remark that children have different temperaments and talents, and that some of them would thrive in a situation where others felt quite bewildered" (de Jong, 1986: 44).

3.4.5.7 Yet, as Arnberg (op cit: 9) reiterates: "Even when parents are fortunate enough to be assisted by bilingual education programmes, they simply cannot assume that the pre-school or school can do the whole job". The present thesis, illustrating on the one hand high levels of parental support for Gaelic bilingual education, and on the other the many practical difficulties which may pertain both in home and school within an English-

dominated society, suggests a need for the fullest possible mutual trust and cooperation between parent and teacher.



GAELIC IN PRIMARY EDUCATION: A STUDY OF THE  
DEVELOPMENT OF GAELIC BILINGUAL EDUCATION  
IN URBAN CONTEXTS

by

ANNE FRASER

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of Ph. D. in the University of  
Glasgow

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#### 4 POPULAR ATTITUDES TOWARDS GAELIC IN EDUCATION

*"Ness is so advanced. We are told that the white Leghorn hens at Fivepenny refuse to talk Gaelic....People cook their 'guga' at dead of night and serve it up as wild goose cutlets in olive oil and sage. Owing to the good French teaching at the school, potatoes are now "pommes de machair" and salt herring are eaten, if at all, with one's cap on as a sign of disrespect" (Morrison, n.d)*

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

4.1.1 What follows is a summary and reappraisal of an attitude study conducted during the period 1987-1988 (full Report available from the Department of Education, University of Glasgow). The original Report has been re-written for present purposes, both in the light of subsequent developments and because the original Survey (although undertaken as a major contribution to this thesis) was commissioned by *Sabhal Nòr Ostaig*, the Gaelic College, requiring presentation of all data to be slanted towards the informational needs of the commissioning body. The College has in the past been relatively less successful in attracting (a) native Gaelic speakers as compared with learners of the language and (b) school leavers as compared with more mature students. Therefore the Report (hereafter referred to as Fraser, 1988) was presented in such a way as to highlight possible reasons for these shortfalls.

4.1.2 In an attempt simultaneously to satisfy the terms of the College's commission as well as the needs of the present study, the questionnaire devised was both lengthy and complex (the time and expense involved in circulating a full-scale postal survey was a major factor in the decision to adopt this approach). This almost certainly had an adverse effect on the rate of return (310 from 1,000 circulated, though there was a substantial number of late returns). On the other hand the disadvantages of this approach may be seen to be outweighed by its advantages in terms of the depth and detail of the response elicited, and, as reported (Fraser, 1988: 6):



4.1.2.1 "considering the unfamiliarity of subjects to replying to a Gaelic questionnaire and the length and complexity of the document this is a gratifying rate of return and is in itself an indication of the importance which respondents attach to Gaelic education".

4.1.3 For present purposes some data have been *omitted* from the original Report (e.g. historical and comparative background, fully dealt with in sections 1 and 2 of the present thesis); sections pertaining to tertiary education in general and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig in particular, though reference is made to relevant findings - e.g. teacher training. Results, summaries, conclusions and recommendations have been re-organised within the parameters of the present thesis and in the light of subsequent developments. Some data have been summarised - e.g. remit, method and procedure. Results from Gaelic-medium and English-medium questionnaires respectively have been collated and all percentages rounded up: comparison between these two groups was of immediate relevance to the Gaelic College, as there is a vital distinction between the "support in principle" of interested non-Gaelic speakers and that of those linguistically qualified to undertake a Further Education course through the medium of Gaelic. Such distinctions are less relevant to Gaelic pre-school and primary education programmes, in which non-Gaelic speakers are deeply involved, as has already been demonstrated in Section 3 (above). Similarly, data relating to the age, geographical and professional spread of the sample (necessarily detailed in the original, in order to facilitate prediction of future demand for the College) are condensed below, though where attitudinal distinctions between urban and rural populations seem to have direct bearing on future planning these are highlighted.

## 4.2 REMIT

4.2.1 The remit was to investigate popular attitudes towards Gaelic in general and Gaelic education in particular; specifically to discover the response of the consumer to recent educational initiatives, both in the voluntary sector (Gaelic play-groups) and mainstream provision (Gaelic primary Units, secondary Gaelic-medium and Gaelic subject teaching). The promotion of positive attitudes towards the language is arguably one of the most important factors affecting the future of Gaelic initiatives, and decisions taken in this area affect, and are affected by, the Gaelic community as a whole. Therefore attempts were made to provide a broad base for the survey, both as regards the target sample (in terms of geographical location, age-range and professional status), and as regards the topic areas introduced and the detail in which each is investigated.

## 4.3 TARGET SAMPLE

4.3.1 A previous survey (MacKinnon, 1981) had already established that considerable goodwill exists towards Gaelic among the general Scottish public, especially as regards Gaelic in education: 70% of a quota sample felt that Gaelic should be provided for those who want it within the official Scottish educational system. More recently a MORI poll (July, 1989) has indicated similar levels of general support in principle for demands to improve the provision of Gaelic television programming. For the purposes of this study it was felt more relevant to target those people who might reasonably be expected to avail themselves of Gaelic educational

provision, and/or whose views may have most direct influence upon its advance: i.e. Gaelic speakers, and those with a demonstrated interest or involvement in Gaelic. To an extent the present survey may be seen as following up an investigation by Seumas Grannd (1983, op cit) in which significant levels of support were revealed for the establishment of Gaelic schools in urban areas (specifically Glasgow and Oban). Gaelic speakers are impossible to identify by normal methods of random sampling - electoral rolls etc (Grannd, op cit: 149ff) - and so the following sources were utilised, in addition to word-of-mouth recommendation and information:

4.3.1.1 Gaelic play-groups and schools offering Gaelic education and/or situated in Gaelic-speaking areas; Colleges (Further Education and Teacher Training); Universities; student organisations;

4.3.1.2 parents' groups; Gaelic youth organisations; ,

4.3.1.3 mailing lists of Gaelic member organisations, book and periodical subscribers etc;

4.3.1.4 contributors to Gaelic radio and TV current affairs, Arts and magazine programmes;

4.3.1.5 names culled from newspaper correspondence and reports, graduation photographs etc;

4.3.1.6 names suggested by other respondents (appended to questionnaires).

#### 4.4 RATE OF RETURN

4.4.1 1,000 questionnaires were circulated by post, 700 written entirely in Gaelic, 300 translated into English.

4.4.2 Overall returns: 310 (31% of total circulated)

4.4.3 Returns in Gaelic: 249 (38% of Gaelic questionnaires circulated)

4.4.4 Returns in English: 61 (20% of English questionnaires circulated)

4.4.5 Late returns bring the level to almost 40%, but the high number of variables made it impractical to revise all statistics in order to incorporate late returns in the results which follow. However, random checks suggest no significant difference in response among these returns.

4.4.6 This should be seen as a fairly encouraging rate of return for a postal survey. As this is believed to have been the first questionnaire of its kind circulated in Gaelic, and as the linguistic usage of many Gaelic speakers relates mainly to social function (4.8.3, below), it is gratifying that the percentage return of Gaelic questionnaires was significantly higher than that of English questionnaires.

#### 4.5 AGE RANGE OF SAMPLE

4.5.1 The age of respondents ranged from 15 to 80+, as summarised in Fig. 1 (below).

#### 4.5.2 FIGURE 1: Age-range of respondents

AGE OF RESPONDENT	NUMBER IN SAMPLE									
(where known)	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	
	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
15-18	*****									
19-24	*****									
25-30	*****									
31-40	*****									
41-50	*****									
51-60	*****									
61+	*****									
	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	

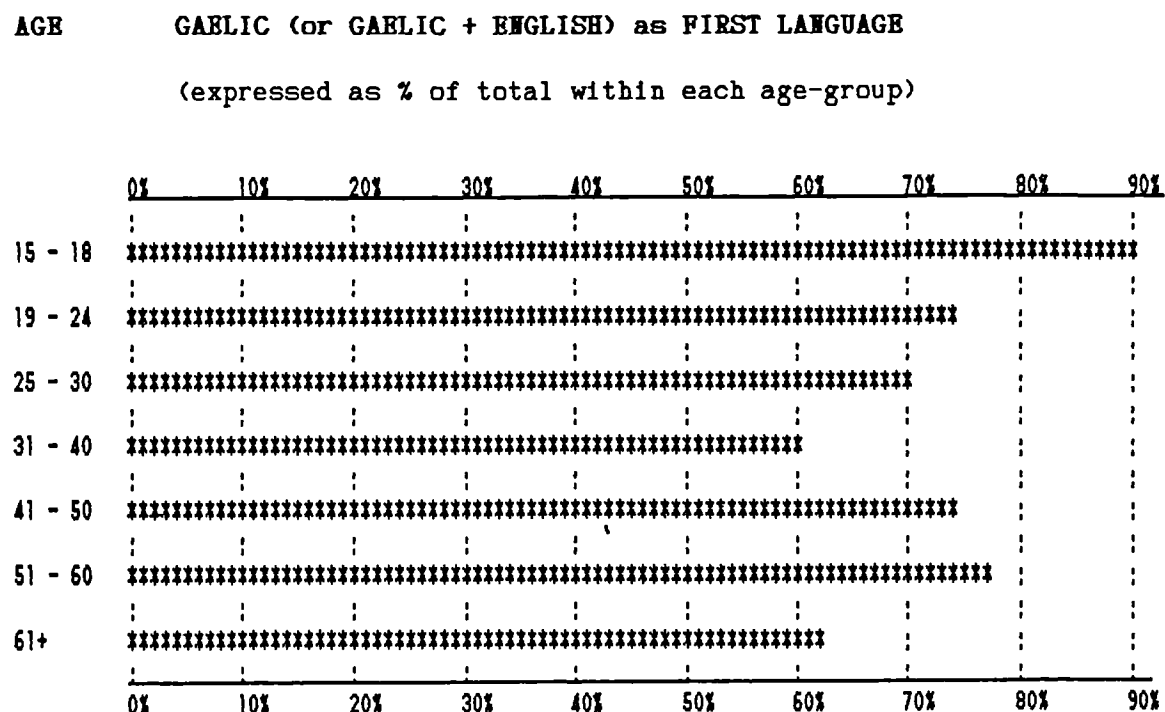
4.5.3 A degree of estimation was inevitable in ranking and sorting the original index of names according to the age and occupation of their owners. However, an attempt was made to represent all age-groups as evenly as possible. The response of the age-range 31 - 40 (the group most likely to be of childrearing age) is encouraging. Parents comprised a relatively easily targeted sub-group, but this age-group is typically burdened with family and other commitments: therefore their diligence in completing and returning the questionnaires may in itself be seen as a measure of their interest in Gaelic educational initiatives. The response of this group is interesting in the light of "weaknesses of attachment to their ethnic language and culture amongst the younger women of childrearing age" in some

more remote Gaelic communities (MacKinnon, 1985: 15) where, MacKinnon says, they have "very grave implications for the future prospects of Gaelic language and cultural transmission into the coming generation" (ibid).

#### 4.6 FIRST LANGUAGE OF RESPONDENTS

4.6.1 A relatively high proportion of respondents in the age-range 31 - 40 cited English rather than Gaelic as their first language (cf Fig. 2, below). This may reflect, at least partially, the proportion of parents with no Gaelic background whose children are involved in Gaelic education schemes.

#### 4.6.2 FIGURE 2: First language in relation to age (where known)



4.6.3 In interpreting Fig. 2 it should be noted that the high proportion of First Language *Gaelic* speakers among the 15 - 24 age-group may reflect the influence of teachers: at least one school appears to have used the questionnaire as a Gaelic class "exercise". Again, the proportion of First Language *English* speakers among the 60+ sample seems to have been swelled by adult learners and non-Gaelic speaking members of Gaelic organisations: judging by comments received, a proportion of native Gaelic-speakers in this age-range may have failed to respond to the questionnaire through feeling out of touch with recent developments, and even, perhaps, with new linguistic conventions - standardised spelling and lexical coinages.

#### 4.7 GEOGRAPHICAL SPREAD

##### 4.7.1 FIGURE 3: geographical spread of respondents (as % of total sample)

#### "GAIDHEALTACHD"

#### URBAN

Western Isles: 101 (32%)

Glasgow: 65 (21%)

Skye and Lochalsh: 32 (10%)

Inverness: 30 (10%)

{Sutherland, Ross

{& Cromarty

{Lochaber: 15 (5%)

Edinburgh: 19 (5%)

Perthshire: 14 (5%)

Argyllshire: 14 (5%)

{Other/not known: 20 (6%)}

4.7.2 In Fig. 3 (above) the term "Gàidhealtachd" is used loosely to differentiate these areas from the urban centres where Gaelic education is in progress. Arguably the town of Inverness is as much (or as little) part of the present-day Gàidhealtachd as Perthshire or most of Argyll. However the term "rural" would be no more appropriate, as the "Gàidhealtachd" by present definition also includes towns such as Stornoway and Oban, clearly differentiated from their surrounding rural environs. In Fig. 4 (below) returns are represented as percentages of the total numbers of Gaelic speakers recorded for each of the areas in the 1981 Census (Withers, 1984: 224), throwing into greater relief the relatively high ROR from the city.

4.7.3 FIGURE 4: spread as % of Gaelic-speaking population per area

"GAIDHEALTACHD"

URBAN

Inverness: 0.8%

\*Glasgow: 0.7%

Skye and Lochalsh: 0.6%

Edinburgh: 0.5%

Western Isles: 0.4%

\*\* (All other areas: 0.2%)

\*"Greater Glasgow" area: total 9157 (Withers, op cit: 224)

\*\*Calculated on total Gaelic speakers recorded as living in the districts represented in the sample: Sutherland, Ross and Cromarty, Lochaber, Argyll (including Mull, Tiree and Islay) and Perthshire. (ibid; Fraser, op cit: 7)

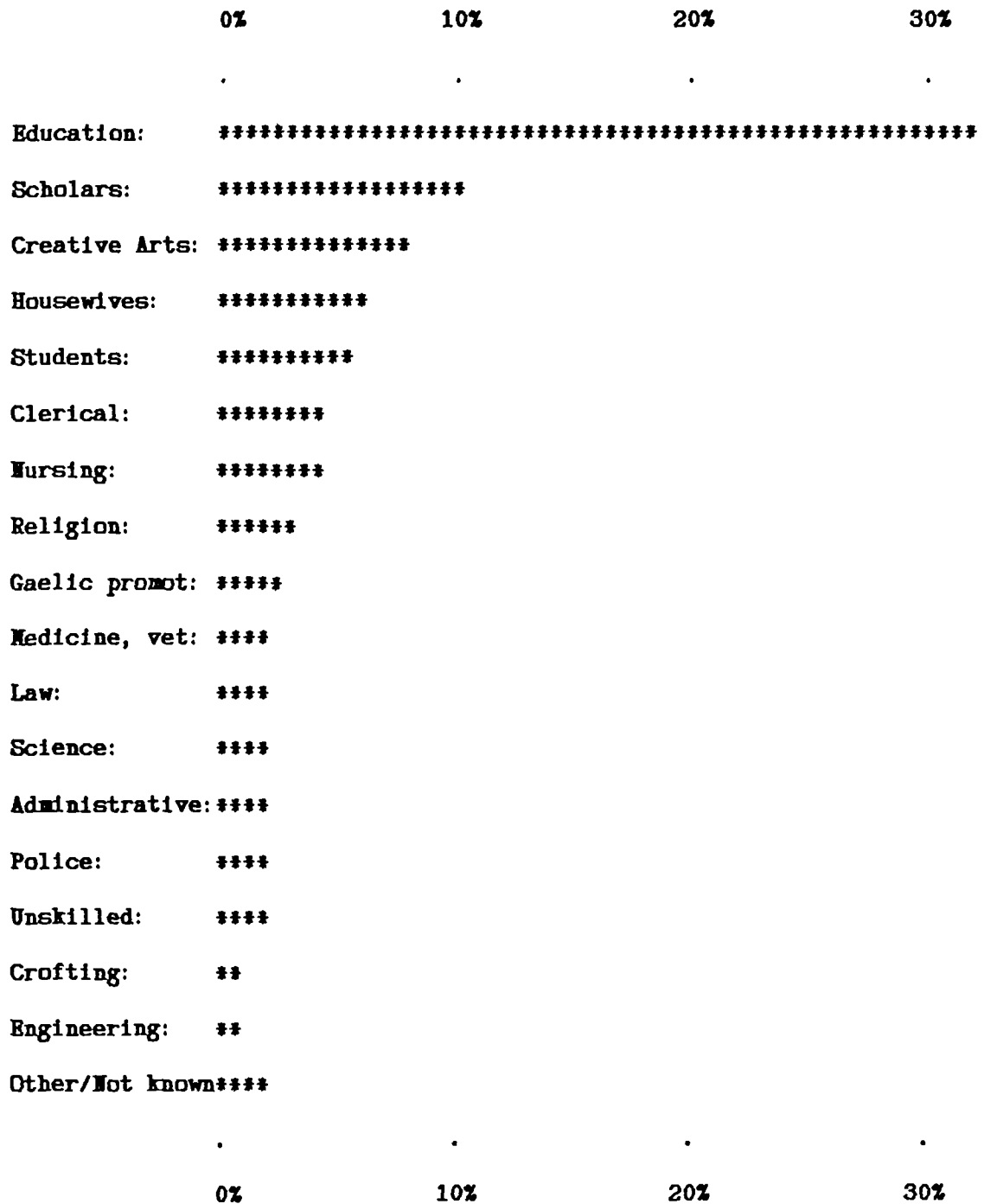


4.7.4 Figs. 3 and 4 seem to indicate a relatively high level of interest in the urban areas, insofar as "interest" may be equated with responding to questionnaires. Of course other factors contribute. The scattered Gaelic speaking populations of Argyll and the mainland Highlands are hard to identify, while existent urban play-groups, Gaelic primary Units, Universities etc provide an easily targeted pool for research purposes. However, all areas were circulated as widely as possible within the limitations already described. Urban response was by no means confined to parents with children currently involved in Gaelic education. 55% of Glasgow respondents indicated involvement of some kind with Gaelic education, but in many instances that involvement was indirect, the age-range from the 20's to the 70's. The age-range of the Inverness sample indicates a similar pattern, peaking between 30 and 50, but containing a fair representation across all other age-groups (Fraser, *op cit*: 7). Edinburgh's 19 respondents are evenly distributed across all ages from 19 to 60+ (*ibid*).

#### 4.8 OCCUPATIONAL SPREAD

4.8.1 Educationists were by far the largest occupational group among those who responded: 86 school teachers, 10 lecturers, 5 education officers and 1 educational psychologist (total 102, or 33% of the total sample, discounting late returns) as illustrated in Fig. 5, below. Thus the survey would appear to provide useful insight into the attitudes of a group whose good-will and confidence seem vital to future development. (The response from this particular group is highlighted in the Report that follows).

#### 4.8.2 FIGURE 5: occupation spread



4.8.3 This is by no means a representative population sample. In addition to the limitations of the sampling procedure it may also be a reflection of

the disparity between oral and literacy skills of many Gaelic speakers (for example about one-third of the bilingual population in Inverness and Ross and Cromarty were recorded as being unable to read Gaelic in the 1971 Census: Withers, op cit: 239). Even among Gaelic literates there may also be some variation in the degree of comfort experienced in negotiating what has been called "the social and intellectual functions of language" (Vejleskov, 1988). For example one respondent - an educated native bilingual housewife who uses Gaelic almost to the exclusion of English in the home - commented verbally, on returning the questionnaire:

4.8.3.1 "I found it hard to do, but it was good for me. We're just not used to having to think in Gaelic about important issues. When I listen to the Gaelic News I often have to translate bits into English before I get what they're on about".

4.8.4 The teaching profession has traditionally been the only area offering opportunity for the extension of Gaelic into the sphere of "intellectual function" and professional life (Withers, op cit: 241) with the exception (now ever-dwindling) of the ministry and, in recent times, the Arts, the media, civic administration (in Comhairle nan Eilean) and Gaelic promotional activity (MacLeod, 1976). The nature of the present sample seems to echo a statement written in 1935:

4.8.4.1 "We do not overlook the fact that in the schools of Argyll, Invernessshire and some parts of Rossshire provision is made for the teaching of Gaelic. It is feared, however, that the opportunities of becoming proficient in the writing and reading of their mother tongue

is, to a very large extent, only taken advantage of by such pupils as propose to enter the teaching profession, and who realise that ability to teach Gaelic will be an aid in obtaining appointments" (TGSI, ~~xxxiv~~: xviii)

4.8.5 Teaching through the medium of Gaelic has required many teachers to use their language habitually in situations for which neither their own social and educational experience nor their pre-service training prepares them (Murray and Morrison, 1984: 16). Of all groups, therefore, they may be assumed not only to be the most familiar with current educational issues but also the most self-confident in using Gaelic to express and ponder them.

#### 4.9 SUMMARY

4.9.1 Although not representative in the accepted sense, the sample may perhaps be seen as a reasonably accurate reflection of the present-day situation of Gaelic: the fairly solid bank of secondary school pupils studying Gaelic as a subject in the Western Isles and Skye; their dispersal as a group and, in some instances loss of Gaelic "identity" on leaving school, especially those who depart the community for purposes of employment and further or higher education; their renewed sense of interest and strengthening of identity when their own children are born and begin their education, especially in areas where Gaelic play-groups and primary Gaelic Units exist to provide philosophical focus and a forum for social intercourse.

4.9.2 MacKinnon (1985a, *op cit*) comments on the apparent increase of Gaelic speaking among young people as recorded in the most recent (1981) Census and again (MacKinnon 1985b: 10) in relation to the social perspectives of representative Scottish Gaelic Speech-Communities:

4.9.2.1 "Whether all these young people may be regarded as effective speakers of Gaelic may be doubtful. Clearly their parents have been sufficiently confident or optimistic in returning them as such....However this in itself represents some substantial measure of goodwill on behalf of the language at a 'grassroots' level".

4.9.3 Some respondents complained about the length and complexity of the questionnaire. On the other hand several respondents stated that they had found its completion an enjoyable and instructive exercise *per se*. A less complex or exclusively English-medium questionnaire might have increased the ROR, but at the expense of a wealth of detail and nuance. There seems little doubt that those who did respond in Gaelic did so with a greater degree of involvement (and perhaps less inhibition) because they were being asked to think not only *about*, but *in* their own language.

#### 4.10 FORM OF QUESTIONNAIRE

4.10.1 The original Questionnaire (Appendix 2) will be seen to contain 27 pages:

4.10.1.1 One page requesting personal details. This was deliberately very generalised and offered respondents the option of omitting names/addresses altogether.

4.10.1.2 Five pages of instructions, relating in turn to each of the five sections.

4.10.1.3 Section 1 (pp 2-14)

In this section respondents were invited to indicate levels of agreement or disagreement with a series of brief "opinions" on Language and Culture (1.1), and Gaelic in Education (1.2 Pre-school, 1.3 Primary, 1.4 Secondary and 1.5 Tertiary).

4.10.1.4 Sections 2 and 3 (pp 16-18)

These sections contained lists of agencies involved in the promotion of Gaelic (2.1 as part of their overall remit and 2.2 as their primary remit). Respondents were asked to rate them in terms of their potential influence and their perceived commitment to exercising this influence positively.

4.10.1.5 Section 4 (pp 20-23)

This section attempted to discover the general educational priorities and constructs of the sample. Possible educational "ingredients" were listed and respondents invited to rank them according to their perceived importance at each stage of education (4.1 pre-school, 4.2 primary school, 4.3 secondary school, 4.5 tertiary education).

4.10.1.6 Section 5 (pp 25-26)

The last section dealt specifically with *Sabhal Mòr Ostaig* (Gaelic College) - in terms of prior knowledge and attitudes.

4.10.2 For the purposes of this Report only the results from Sections 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4 and 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 are presented in detail, though reference may be made in passing to results obtained in other sections, where relevant.

#### 4.11 SECTION 1

4.11.1 Section 1.1: *Attitudes towards Language and Culture* invited the reaction of respondents to a series of propositions ("opinions") regarding language and culture: topics introduced were as follows:

- 4.11.1.1 bilingualism in general and
- 4.11.1.2 Gaelic/English bilingualism in particular
- 4.11.1.3 multiculturalism in general and
- 4.11.1.4 the Gaelic language as a minority language in Scotland

4.11.2 Respondents were asked indicate their agreement or disagreement with each opinion in turn, by selecting a letter as follows:

- 4.11.2.1 A: "I agree very much with this"
- B: "I agree with this"
- C: "I don't feel strongly one way or the other about this"
- D: "I disagree with this"
- E: "I disagree very much with this"

4.11.3 It became clear from comments made by respondents that the "C" category ("*no strong feelings*") was also used in some instances to represent "*I don't know*" or "*I don't understand the question*", which in other instances was recorded by leaving the question blank. It was



therefore considered appropriate in recording the results to include a "C/?" category which combines all "C" responses and all blank responses.

4.11.4 Sections 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4 followed the same format:

4.11.4.1 1.2: *Attitudes towards Gaelic in Pre-school Education* addressed topics such as the importance of organised play activity outside the home, the importance of pre-school Gaelic exposure as opposed to home-based linguistic input, the optimum language policy within Gaelic play-groups and the perceived effects of non-Gaelic speaking incursion into Gaelic-speaking communities.

4.11.4.2 1.3: *Attitudes towards Gaelic in the Primary School* addressed the perceived value of Gaelic-medium primary methods in relation to linguistic development, resource availability, the future of the language, national educational priority, and the integration of Gaelic-educated children within the wider social context.

4.11.4.3 1.4: *Attitudes towards Gaelic in the Secondary School* addressed the value of developing Gaelic-medium education into the secondary sector - in terms of linguistic continuity, general academic progress and cognitive development, the status of the language within the school curriculum, the national curriculum, and the political implications of language promotion in general.

#### 4.12 SUMMARY AND GENERAL DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.12.1 Results of the survey indicate strong positive attitudes towards minority languages and cultures in general, and Gaelic language and culture in particular. A typical comment sums up the general attitude of the majority:

4.12.1 "Tha fiosrachadh, eòlas, gliocas agus feallsanachd taisgte anns gach cànan agus cultur. Tha mòran a dh'fhaodas sinn fhoghlaim bhuatha a nì feum don a h-uile".

*("There is knowledge, experience, wisdom and philosophy stored in every language and every culture. There is much to be learned from them that is of universal value") (Fraser, 1988: 13).*

4.12.2 The results corroborate Grand's earlier findings (*An investigation into the feasibility of establishing Gaelic/English Bilingual Schools on the mainland of Scotland*, 1983, op cit) as to the perceived importance of Gaelic-medium education - for language maintenance among bilingual families, and to right the "loss of heritage and culture" felt by some non-Gaelic speakers (ibid: 173 - 174). As one elderly respondent plaintively remarked (Fraser, op cit: 118):

4.12.2.1 "Dear sirs or madams, To me this is a great pity that you were not all around Highland Perthshire at the turn of the century when the High Priests of your Department of Education banned the use

of Gaelic in all schools where every burn and hill has a Gaelic name of Perthshire origin"

4.12.3 Similarly they confirm Grannd's findings that "amongst parents with no Gaelic connections.....there were a substantial number who believed that bilingualism was by itself of great educational value" (Grannd, op cit: 175). Comments elicited by Grannd's survey also indicated that "patriotic and cultural reasons" played a significant rôle in such attitudes - e.g

4.12.3.1 "A nation's life is in it's culture and it's culture is in it's children" (ibid: 176)

4.12.4 This is echoed by the comment of a respondent whose children attend a Gaelic Primary Unit in Glasgow:

4.12.4.1 "I think there is not enough of our language taught in school.... There should be more information so that parent's have the chance to chose. I am english and my husband Scottish. The goverment ruin to many things about Scotland. I dont know much about gaelic myself but i would like to learn" (Fraser, op cit: 119).

4.12.5 It might be argued that a positive response is unsurprising, or "proves nothing" - given that the majority of the respondents are Gaelic speakers and so could be expected to display maximum loyalty towards their own culture in answering a questionnaire of this type. As one respondent grumbled:

4.12.5.1 "Saoil dè feum a th'ann ceisteachan a chur gu daoine a tha gu làidir air cùlaibh na Gàidhlig?"

*("What's the point of sending a questionnaire to people who are strongly in favour of Gaelic?") (Fraser, op cit: 118).*

4.12.6 This, however, seems somewhat specious. Grannd, in his investigation of a more random population sample elicited a substantial proportion of negative responses, from respondents who view Gaelic as "old-fashioned and useless in the modern world" (Grannd, op cit: 178) and a minority of respondents "who made abusive and virulently anti-Gaelic comments":

4.12.6.1 "It would seem that there is still a small residue of ethnocentric anti-Gaelic feeling in Scotland, the kind of feeling which resulted in generations of Gaelic speaking children being beaten and stigmatized for speaking their own language" (ibid).

4.12.7 There would seem little point in confirming this phenomenon one more time. Indeed it may be argued that such attitudes are more likely to change in future if current initiatives prosper, are seen to prosper and to be available to any section of the Scottish population which wishes to take advantage of them (cf 1.1, above). On the other hand there would seem every point in attempting to discover in detail what the Gaelic speaker feels about his own language in the late twentieth century, and to throw some light on the factors which influence his attitudes, in order to facilitate the future success of present measures. For any language

planning exercise to succeed the need must be felt by the target group, and the advantages perceived (Rubin, 1983: 5). To dismiss the present findings on the grounds that the sample is predominantly Gaelic speaking would be to ignore all that is known of passive or negative grassroots attitudes in the recent historical past (1.2, above). Conversely within the historic perspective more positive attitudes would seem likely to reflect to some degree popular response to recent positive initiatives.

4.12.8 For reasons which have been discussed, (1.1 and 1.2, above), the activities of external Gaelic promotional agencies have tended in the past to be met by discouraging response at grassroots level (with obvious exceptions, cf community-based insurrection over landlordism, Hunter, 1976; Grigor, 1979). Within the last century the attitudes of the Gaelic-speaking community seem dominated by a perception of Gaelic culture as a personal or local aberration with strong sentimental connotations but less and less practical relevance within the ever-widening parameters of modern society (1.2, above). This attitude has by no means been completely dispelled among today's young people:

4.12.8.1 "I believe very strongly in keeping Gaelic alive and appreciate how lucky I am to be bilingual. However I think that the teaching of subjects in Gaelic is of no point whatsoever. When I arrived at University I was at the same level as those from other areas of Britain - what would I have been like if I had been taught in Gaelic? My Gaelic grammar is of a high standard though my vocabulary is not large - however I do have two languages in my head - and island people never were pretentious speakers" (Fraser, op cit: 118).

4.12.9 Such tenacious perceptions have almost certainly been affected by the historically low status of Gaelic in mainstream education - setting up a vicious circle which it has been hard to break:

4.12.9.1 "The ignorance or apathy of Highland parents in discouraging the use of Gaelic in schools is but a wretched excuse on the part of those whose function it is to direct and control our educational machinery..." (TGS, 1885, xi: 124)

4.12.10 However understandable in their historical context, the "ignorance and apathy" appear to have contributed to a certain loss of sympathy (or at least patience) even among some of the external agencies whose influence had been most helpful in the political arena. Thus in 1909 the Annual Report of the London Gaelic Society (cf 1.2, above) adopts a somewhat disenchanted tone:

4.12.10.1 "Along with other kindred Societies we have on various occasions used our best endeavours to obtain from the Education Department a fuller recognition of the educational value of the children's mother tongue, but the reply has invariably been that such demands should come from the parents through the School Boards. Therefore the matter remains entirely in the hands of the Highland people themselves, and when they realise the great importance of the question they will surely see to it that the language is accorded its proper place in the school curriculum." (GSL Annual Report, 1909:15)

4.12.11 Even discounting the questionable assumption that the School Boards of the Highlands represented the views and interests of ordinary parents (1.2.38.1, above) such a statement seems unenlightened. Little attempt seems to have been made to include the Gaelic community in discussions about its own destiny, or to inform and encourage its members to adopt a more positive stance: John Murdoch was one of the very few who worked from within the community, speaking to as well as *on behalf of* its members, through the medium of their own language (Gillies, 1930:134). His efforts - and their immediate and palpable effects on communal morale in the Gàidhealtachd during the 1870's and 80's - stand in stark contrast to the pages of post-prandial polemic which have survived from this period, even the best hearted of which frequently shows dangerous signs of distance (geographical and metaphorical) from the objects of its concern:

4.12.11.1 "A good deal is said as to Gaelic being of no value nowadays, and it is, if not discouraged, at best being allowed to die a natural death. I think that a Highlander who advocates its neglect altogether deserves some censure. Gaelic may not perhaps be of much use to a man in his daily avocations, but once learned, or retained if known, it is an easy burden to carry" (Sir Hector Munro, 1902, quoted TGS I xxv: 25).

4.12.12 For these reasons there seem grounds for suggesting that the present survey may be viewed as a measure of the Gaelic community's response not only to changes in official attitudes but also to increased promotional activity within the community - in which, especially through

the work of *Comhairle nan Sgoiltean Araich*, the Gaelic-speaking people themselves have played an instrumental rather than a passive rôle.

4.12.13 On the other hand similar research conducted in Wales and Ireland highlights the danger of investing too much importance in indicators of general attitude in terms of long-term changes in linguistic patterns. At both individual and societal level there are enormous pressures to conform to the norms of the dominant culture. A Welsh survey into the attitudes of bilingual mothers of monolingual children (Harrison, Bellin and Piette, 1981) echoes the apparent anomaly found among committed Scottish Gaelic-speakers who strive to promote the language while failing to transmit it to their own children:

4.12.13.1 "bilingual mothers do not set out to attack Welsh. Rather their failure to pass on that language contributes to a situation they regret....There is a separation of society which ought, it seems, to be bilingual, from family which will very likely cease to be so" (Harrison, Bellin and Piette, op cit: 61)

4.12.14 In Ireland the CLAR Report (1973) showed only too clearly the gulf which can lie between general goodwill and individual behaviour:

4.12.14.1 "support for the language is very high when 'Irish' is expressed in terms of ethnic identity, cultural value and in terms of the Gaeltacht. Support is rather negative on the dimension of 'school Irish' and commitment to its use is low, while beliefs about the



eventual fate of the language, and its position and utility in the modern world, are generally pessimistic" (CLAR, 1973: 298).

4.12.15 While attitudes towards Irish in the schools appear to have improved substantially in the period from 1973 - 1983 (O Riagáin and O Glaisáin, 1984: 33), seen by O Riagáin as endorsement of and response to "the general thrust of present policies" (O Riagáin, 1985: 17), there is no apparent improvement as to (a) "beliefs in the viability and utility of Irish" (O Riagáin and O Glaisáin, 1984: 32) or, even more significantly, (b) language usage and ability (ibid).

4.12.16 The Welsh survey summarised the causes of inter-generational failure to transmit the language as follows:

4.12.16.1 "the encouragement, even pressures, for (English) generally are stronger and more widespread than the corresponding support and facilities fostering bilingualism in Wales" (Harrison, Bellin and Piette, op cit: 61).

4.12.17 In further analysing individual responses (ibid: 62 - 63), the study found several common factors among attitudes of mothers of monolingual children:

4.12.17.1 "definite aims": the mothers were characterised by the importance with which they invest explicit information transmission (as opposed to general communication) as a prime linguistic function;

they tended to be less tolerant of baby talk and more in favour of children's "keeping quiet when told to" (ibid: 62)

4.12.17.2 lack of information about bilingualism: "to gain a recognition of the certainly benign, and likely positive, effects of bilingualism needs widely available and simply understood information" (ibid) - the study points out that lack of such information has tended to promote social polarisation: wider support for bilingualism among social classes 1 and 2 who, if not already aware of such information, will know how to seek it (ibid)

4.12.17.3 tensions within linguistically mixed marriages, and failure to include the anxieties of monolingual fathers in efforts to encourage bilingualism

4.12.17.4 the relationship between language and long-term employment prospects: "parents have been accustomed to separate Welsh from prospects of work, and that can hardly foster the language amongst people who seek successful careers. There is scope for a new association" (ibid: 63).

4.12.18 Thus the present survey - and the overall strength of goodwill it represents - may seem to provide a basis upon which to build. Officially-led language programmes are unlikely to prosper without such goodwill; conversely popular goodwill is not enough to withstand the totality of external pressures which affect individual behaviour in modern society.

#### 4.13 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS: (a) LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

4.13.1 Attitudes towards bilingualism The sample demonstrate strongly positive attitudes towards both bilingualism in general and Gaelic/English bilingualism in particular. 97% consider bilingualism to be advantageous *per se* and 92% disagree with the proposition that the ability to speak Gaelic is irrelevant in modern society, despite the dominance of English as an international *lingua franca* (Fraser, 1988: 3.1.i and ii). 90% disagree with the suggestion that Gaelic is in such a terminal state that it should be allowed to rest in peace (ibid: 3.1.xiv).

4.13.2 Attitudes towards Gaelic cultural identity 91% consider it important to defend distinctive local or regional cultural identities against the homogenising influence of the media (ibid: 3.1.xiv). Attempts to define the value of minority cultures within modern society elicited rather more measured, but almost uniformly positive, responses. Thus 73% consider that *understanding* one's own culture contributes towards understanding of other cultures; 71% consider that *knowing about* the history and culture of one's own region or sub-group is of value in dealing with wider contemporary issues; 72% feel that learning to *value* their own language and culture will enhance the self-regard of Gaelic-speakers as a particular ethnic group (ibid: 3.1.vi, xiii, xi). Conversely 85% object (64% "very strongly") to the suggestion that their very adherence to an anachronistic culture may perpetuate low expectations among Gaelic speakers (ibid: 3.1.xii). Comments appended to this question indicate that respondents disagreed both with the description of Gaelic in such terms and with the extrapolation.

4.13.3 Attitudes towards the status of Gaelic within Scotland 67% of the sample agree that Gaelic ought to be formally recognised as "an official British language" (ibid: 3.1.x) though several respondents queried what was meant by this concept, despite its common currency among language activists in the late 60's and 70's when it seemed an essential precursor to any improvement in provision in education or the media: subsequent events seem to have overtaken this assumption at least to some extent, despite its continuing recognition in Wales as a vital safeguard against future changes in official attitude. However, while 76% favour cultural pluralism - the principle of support for all minority cultures in the United Kingdom (ibid 3.1.iii) - 93% feel that Gaelic deserves special recognition in view of its status as an indigenous Scottish language (ibid: 3.1.viii). 83% disagree that "Urdu, Chinese, Italian and so on" have claims comparable to those of Gaelic within Scotland (ibid: 3.1.vii) (cf "*other languages have a protected home-base elsewhere - Gaelic does not*" - ibid: 15) though comments suggest recognition of the validity of the claims of more recently introduced ethnic cultures (e.g. "we must strive for our own language, but if any other group wishes to strive for their own language we ought all to work together, not against one another"). Again, a somewhat lower (though nonetheless significant) majority of respondents (63%) supports the proposition that "Lowland Scots" culture deserves equal Government funding, (ibid: 3.1.ix), and some comments indicate recognition of Gaelic's "official" standing in the historical past:

4.13.3.1 "Cha robh 'seasamh' riamh aig a' chànan sin aig Cùirt na h-Alba mar a bha aig Gàidhlig" (ibid: 16)

*("That language never had status in the Court of Scotland as Gaelic did").*

4.13.4 Attitudes towards language as a cohesive/divisive element It may be argued that the promotion of 20th century Celtic minority interests within the United Kingdom has suffered obliquely as a consequence of major political developments: two World Wars and the growth of post-Imperialist consciousness have militated against any movement which might - however inappropriately - be construed as chauvinistic. Growing awareness of racial tensions within our own and other societies may cause uninformed bystanders to see Gaelic promotional activity in terms of the erection or heightening of racial boundaries which (unless one belongs to the Gaelic community) seem surplus to present-day societal requirements. Thus the Glasgow "Evening Times" (10.11.84) heralded preliminary discussions prior to the establishment of the first Gaelic Primary Unit with an article headlined "GAELIC PLAN MAY SPLIT CITY PUPILS", and a meeting in Tiree, packed with local people eager for information on Gaelic-medium education, (5.12.88), was silenced by an impassioned prepared speech from a non-native professional man of some standing in the community. He commenced:

4.13.4.1 "You people should be ashamed of yourselves coming to a peaceful little island like this stirring up trouble and starting Northern Ireland in Tiree."

4.13.5 Dealing successfully with such arguments, however spurious, can constitute a continuing problem to Gaelic speakers and parents of children in Gaelic education programmes and even, in a few situations, be a

perceived problem for children themselves, in terms of integration within a whole-school environment. Therefore it seems important to discover the attitudes of the present sample towards such sensitive issues, to assess the extent to which they themselves may be troubled by similar underlying doubts or fears. An element of doubt does seem present: all four questions relating to language and culture as potentially divisive issues elicit fairly high "C" ("not sure", "don't know" or blank) responses. However the majority of respondents believe that the maintenance of cultural distinctions does not in itself cause tension. This proposition was couched in two different ways - "*difference of language and culture makes hostility arise between people*" (ibid: 3.1.iv) and "*peace will not be achieved in the world unless people become more similar in culture, language and custom*" (ibid: 3.1.xv) - and the two statements were widely separated in the text. Yet there is remarkable correspondence between the percentages who disagree with both forms of the statement (67% and 68% respectively) although the first elicited a slightly higher proportion (3%) of those feeling very strongly on the subject.

4.13.6 There is, however, a discernible variation in response to the two counter-propositions as to what may constitute a more likely cause of tension. 61% agree that it is not cultural differences *per se*, but lack of *understanding* of other cultures which creates hostility (ibid: 3.1.v). But a considerably lower proportion (53%) accept that failure to uphold the cultural and linguistic rights of different groups is a source of tension in modern society (ibid: 3.1.xvi). This statement also elicited the highest "don't know" ("C") response of this section of the questionnaire (28%). Indeed some of the appended comments denied that the proposition had any

relevance whatsoever to the present survey, despite its fairly obvious application to situations of unrest in other societies if not to the traditionally more passive Gaelic community within Scotland: e.g.

4.13.6.1 "Chan eil mi a' smaoineachadh gu bheil ceangal aig a' cheisd seo ri Gàidhlig idir. Gheibh daoine adhbhar aimhreit a dhèanamh fhad 's a bhitheas daoine ann"

*("I see no connection between this question and Gaelic. People will find a reason to fight as long as people exist")*.

4.13.7 Variation in attitude between Gaelic-medium and English-medium respondents The latter topic (4.13.6, above) produced an interesting variation between those replying in Gaelic (predominantly native Gaelic speakers) and those replying in English (predominantly Gaelic learners or those with an interest in the language question). This is illustrated in Fig. 6 below.

#### 4.13.7.1 FIGURE 6

Comparison between Gaelic-medium response (GMRS) and English-medium response (EMRS) to hypothesis that "failure to uphold linguistic and cultural rights may cause tension in the world" (ibid: 3.1.xvi)

	A/B (agree)	C (no strong feelings)	D/E (disagree)
GMRS	50%	31%	20%
EMRS	68%	18%	15%

4.13.8 This discrepancy may perhaps be interpreted as confirmation of the essentially non-confrontational nature of many Gaelic speakers' attitudes, as distinct from a greater tendency among learner-enthusiasts - with, perhaps, a higher level of political commitment and/or objectivity - to view the matter of language policy in terms of human rights. This would seem to be borne out by the unequivocal tenor of many comments made by English-medium respondents in this and further sections of the questionnaire: e.g. "Cornish and Manx didn't die, they were wiped out. Gaelic isn't dying, it's being wiped out" (ibid: 19) and, again, "They must make amends for cultural genocide. One could take this to the International Court of Justice" (ibid: 33).

4.13.9 On the other hand, as shown in Fig. 7 (below) a higher proportion of the predominantly Gaelic-speaking sample sees the revival of Gaelic as "a language of daily neighbourhood use" as a more urgent priority than its promotion as a cultural commodity world-wide (4.19.1.xvii). This variation brings to mind the rôle of sympathetic societies such as An Comunn Gaidhealach and the Gaelic Society of Inverness, who have tended, with some notable exceptions, to devote their main effort towards the preservation and dissemination of Gaelic literature, tradition and music, despite their own awareness of the ever-weakening state of the language as a spoken medium even within heartland areas (cf 1.2, above).



4.13.9.1 FIGURE 7

Variations between Gaelic medium response (GMRS) and English medium response (EMRS) to hypothesis that "promotion of Gaelic culture world-wide is a more urgent priority than its revival as a language of everyday neighbourhood use (ibid: 3.1.xvii)

	A/B (agree)	C (no strong feelings)	D/E (disagree)
GMRS	6%	15%	78%
EMRS	14%	20%	67%

4.13.10 Taken together these two variations (Figs 6 and 7) may, in the most general terms, suggest the valuable complementary rôles which may be played by native Gaelic speakers and language enthusiasts respectively in the future, if each is sensitive to the strengths and sensibilities of the other.

4.14 RESULTS: 1.1 LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IN GENERAL

4.14.1 "Bilingualism (the ability to speak more than one language) is a very useful thing, no matter what the languages."

A	B	C/?	D	E	TOTAL
261	41	8	-	-	310
(84%)	(13%)	(3%)			

Percentage agreement: 97%

Percentage disagreement: 0%

4.14.1i "Nowadays, with the importance of English throughout the world, there's no point in speaking a minority language like Gaelic."

A	B	C/?	D	E	TOTAL
12	-	13	46	239	310
(4%)		(4%)	(15%)	(77%)	

Percentage agreement: 4%

Percentage disagreement: 92%

4.14.1ii "In a multi-cultural country like Scotland the Government ought to support every culture and language."

A	B	C/?	D	E	TOTAL
144	92	30	27	17	310
(46%)	(30%)	(10%)	(9%)	(5%)	

Percentage agreement: 76%

Percentage disagreement: 14%

4.14.iv "Difference of language and culture makes hostility arise between people."

A	B	C/?	D	E	TOTAL
9	40	54	104	103	310
(3%)	(13%)	(17%)	(34%)	(33%)	

Percentage agreement: 16%

Percentage disagreement: 67%

4.14.v "Lack of understanding of different languages and cultures makes hostility arise between people."

A	B	C/?	D	E	TOTAL
59	130	43	55	23	310
(19%)	(42%)	(14%)	(18%)	(7%)	

Percentage agreement: 61%

Percentage disagreement: 15%

4.14.vi "No-one can understand other cultures if they don't understand their own."

A	B	C/?	D	E	TOTAL
102	123	46	29	10	310
(33%)	(40%)	(15%)	(9%)	(3%)	

Percentage agreement: 73%

Percentage disagreement: 12%

4.14.vii "The Government ought not to give any more support to Gaelic than it does to any other ethnic minority in Scotland - like Urdu, Chinese, Italian, and so on."

A	B	C/?	D	E	TOTAL
13	16	23	76	182	310
(4%)	(5%)	(7%)	(25%)	(59%)	

Percentage agreement: 9%

Percentage disagreement: 84%

4.14.viii "The Government ought to give special encouragement to Gaelic as the hereditary language of Scotland."

A	B	C/?	D	E	TOTAL
231	56	10	11	2	310
(75%)	(18%)	(3%)	(4%)	(1%)	

Percentage agreement: 92%

Percentage disagreement: 5%

4.14.ix "The Government ought to give the same support to Lowland Scots culture as it gives to the culture of the Gaels in Scotland."

A	B	C/?	D	E	TOTAL
70	123	65	37	15	310
(23%)	(40%)	(21%)	(12%)	(5%)	

Percentage agreement: 63%

Percentage disagreement: 17%

4.14.x "The Government ought to recognise Gaelic as an official British language."

A	B	C/?	D	E	TOTAL
156	54	41	34	25	310
(50%)	(17%)	(13%)	(11%)	(8%)	

Percentage agreement: 67%

Percentage disagreement: 19%

4.14.xi "The Gaels will not grow self-confident until they have confidence in their own language and culture."

A	B	C/?	D	E	TOTAL
148	74	61	19	8	310
(48%)	(24%)	(20%)	(6%)	(3%)	

Percentage agreement: 72%

Percentage disagreement: 9%

4.14.xii "The Gaels would become more self-confident and go-ahead if they would turn their backs on a language and culture belonging to days gone by."

A	B	C	D	E	TOTAL
15	17	16	65	197	310
(5%)	(5%)	(5%)	(21%)	(64%)	

Percentage agreement: 10%

Percentage disagreement: 85%

4.14.xiii "A people cannot find a solution to today's problems without knowledge and understanding of their own history and culture."

A	B	C/?	D	E	TOTAL
99	122	63	22	4	310
(32%)	(39%)	(20%)	(7%)	(1%)	

Percentage agreement: 71%

Percentage disagreement: 8%

4.14.xiv "The world will be a poor place if every country and people become the same, in their culture, their language and customs, through the influence and other media."

A	B	C/?	D	E	TOTAL
204	79	7	11	9	
(66%)	(25%)	(2%)	(4%)	(3%)	

Percentage agreement: 91%

Percentage disagreement: 7%

4.14.xv "Peace will not be achieved in the world unless people become more similar in culture, language and custom."

A	B	C/?	D	E	TOTAL
14	27	58	118	93	
(5%)	(9%)	(19%)	(38%)	(30%)	

Percentage agreement: 14%

Percentage disagreement: 68%

4.14.xvi "Peace will not be achieved in the world until people's rights to maintain their own language and culture are upheld."

A	B	C/?	D	E	TOTAL
75	89	87	47	12	
(24%)	(29%)	(28%)	(15%)	(4%)	

Percentage agreement: 53%

Percentage disagreement: 19%

4.14.xvii "It would make more sense to spend money on promoting the priceless culture of the Gael worldwide than on resuscitating Gaelic as a language of daily neighbourhood use."

A	B	C/?	D	E	TOTAL
12	12	50	122	114	
(4%)	(4%)	(16%)	(39%)	(37%)	

Percentage agreement: 8%

Percentage disagreement: 76%

4.14.xviii "From time to time small ancient languages go out of existence whatever measures are taken to preserve them: as Gaelic has become so weakened in Scotland it would be better to let it die, like Cornish or Manx."

A	B	C/?	D	E	TOTAL
19	8	4	30	249	
(6%)	(3%)	(1%)	(10%)	(80%)	

Percentage agreement: 9%

Percentage disagreement: 90%

#### 4.15 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS: GAELIC IN PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

4.15.1 **Introductory** The Gaelic Play-group movement has been one of the fastest-growing and highest-profile efforts in the history of Gaelic language promotion. It has been firmly established at grassroots level. From it has sprung parental involvement and contact nation-wide, and this has in turn created parental demand for Gaelic-medium education to be extended into mainstream primary (and secondary) education. From a philosophical point of view the movement has been equally revolutionary. The concept of adults constructively *playing* with children - at least after the earliest infant stage - seems fairly foreign to Gaelic tradition: a major part of the daily work-load was performed by women, and Gaelic lullabies and work-songs heavily outweigh surviving examples of traditional "nursery rhymes" and songs for children to sing. Thus *Comhairle nan Sgoiltean Araich's* primary motivation from its inception has been to alter the associations of Gaelic:

4.15.1.1 "A child learns about life by observation and experiment. He will use and respond most readily to those things which he finds the most stimulating, enjoyable and fun, and will latch onto whichever language is associated with such things. If a bilingual child's stimulation, enjoyment and fun become more readily available through English than through Gaelic, his English will come on apace while his Gaelic will tend to stagnate. In such a situation, there is a danger that the child may reject Gaelic altogether and refuse to use it even with his parents" (Scammell, 1985: 21).



**4.15.2 Attitudes towards pre-school education** The perceived importance of the Gaelic play-group movement seems to be reflected in results in this section. 90% of the sample think pre-school education is a good thing in itself (Fraser, op cit: 3.2.i); 87% are in favour of organised Gaelic pre-school experience for children who expect to receive some form of Gaelic education in the primary school (ibid: 3.2.iii); 84% believe organised Gaelic-medium pre-school experience is valuable for all children whatever form of primary education they expect to receive (ibid: 3.2.iv). In all the fore-going results a considerably higher proportion of the Gaelic-speaking sample agrees (or disagrees) "very strongly" with each hypothesis when compared with English returns - by 25% on the importance of Gaelic pre-school experience as a preparation for Gaelic primary education (ibid: 3.2.iii, op cit) and by 21% as regards the value of Gaelic pre-school experience whatever the intended primary school (ibid: 3.2.iv, op cit).

**4.15.3 Perceived rôle of pre-school education in language maintenance** 80% of respondents acknowledge that playing through the medium of Gaelic is important as a means of giving the parental language pleasurable associations (ibid: 3.2.v) - a concept which may not necessarily be self-evident to native Gaelic-speakers, the majority of whom, one may reasonably assume, use their language without undue consideration as to context or function. However comments appended to this question seem to indicate that some respondents have assumed that the question refers to unsupervised peer-group play activity: e.g. "they will only play in a language when they prefer it" (ibid: 26). As the question appears amid a series of questions specifically relating to organised Gaelic play-groups, such comments may indicate that there is still work to be done in promoting the

concept of adult involvement in child-led play, its importance to the social and cognitive development of young children and its potential as a source of cultural and linguistic input.

4.15.4 Perceived rôle of the home in language maintenance One respondent remarked, re the importance of pre-school education (ibid: 3.2.1): "*It would be altogether better if mothers and fathers would speak to their children at home*". In anticipation of this reaction, response was invited to the suggestion that "the home, mother's knee, is the best 'nursery' of all" (ibid: 3.2.11) - which elicited a fairly high degree of overall support and comments such as "*If they do not hear Gaelic there it will surely die*". Of course acknowledgement of the importance of the home environment does not exclude recognition of organised external activity as a valuable adjunct (ibid: 3.2.1). However it seems that a significant proportion of respondents (especially those who replied in English - cf Fig. 9, below) feel that modern circumstances militate against the positive influence of the home in many instances: e.g. "*it depends what sort of mother, what sort of home*", "*this is true when the mother can spare enough time*" and "*unfortunately not every mother can be with her children all the time as in the past*" (ibid: 24). Comparison between levels of support for these two proposals is shown in Fig. 8 below, and illustrates the considerable importance attached by this sample to organised pre-school activity; variation between English- and Gaelic-medium respondents is shown in Fig. 9, below, and indicates that in fact the majority of the Gaelic-speaking sample sees the home as being of equal importance.

#### 4.15.4.1 FIGURE 8

Response to the proposals that (a) "pre-school education is a good thing" and (b) "home is a more important agency":

	A/B (agree)	C (no strong feelings)	D/E (disagree)
(a)	90%	7%	3%
(b)	72%	13%	15%

#### 4.15.4.2 FIGURE 9

Comparison between Gaelic-medium response (GMR) and English-medium response (EMR) to importance (a) of play-group and (b) home, as above:

	A (agree very much)	B (agree)	C (no strong feelings)
(a) GMR	66%	23%	7%
EMR	62%	31%	5%
(b) GMR	60%	17%	11%
EMR	25%	28%	18%

4.15.5 Variations between English- and Gaelic-medium responses Despite the Gaelic-speaking sample's apparent enthusiasm for pre-school play-groups (Fig 8, above) there is a highly significant variation between the two groups' perception of the importance of the home (Fig. 9 above). This may

be interpreted in a variety of ways - the truth probably lying in a combination of some or all of the following elements:

4.15.5.1 awareness on the part of Gaelic-speakers that a few hours of play-group experience per week, however valuable, cannot compare with the potential language-input of home-life, if Gaelic-speaking parents are motivated to take advantage of the full range of learning situations for the child

4.15.5.2 lesser likelihood of Gaelic-speaking Island mothers to be in full-time employment and unable to devote their full time and attention to pre-school children (cf 3.3.1.9, above); generally faster pace of life and greater pressures outwith the Gàidhealtachd

4.15.5.3 stronger real and emotive association between home and Gaelic in the Gaelic-speaking sample's own childhood experience

4.15.5.4 availability to the Gaelic-speaking sample of a greater range of informal contexts for Gaelic input, even, to some extent, in the city: non-Gaelic speakers, especially those living outwith the Gàidhealtachd, may rely on the Gaelic play-group as their children's only exposure to the language (cf 3.3.1.22, above).

4.15.6 Taking these variations into account, the enthusiasm from all groups for the Gaelic cròileagan is even more striking. Comments throughout this section acknowledge that respondents are thoroughly aware of the historical significance of the Gaelic play-group movement. One typical

remark is "'S e an obair a tha a' dol air adhart anns na cròileagain an rud as dòchasaiche a tha air tachairt airson iomadh bliadhna" (*"The work which is going on in the Gaelic play-groups is the most hopeful thing which has happened for many a year"*). One respondent points out the particular relevance of Gaelic play-groups to families where one parent only is Gaelic-speaking, an ever-increasing situation which the respondent cites as one of the main reasons for failure to pass on the language to children in the past (cf also 4.12.17.3, above).

4.15.7 Responsibility for pre-school Gaelic provision A very high percentage of respondents feel that this should, where possible, become part of Regional Authority provision. Although 72% of the sample feel that Gaelic play-groups should continue to be run voluntarily (*"if that's the only way"*, and *"with increased support from the authorities"*: *ibid*: 3.2.vi) 88% feel (63% "very strongly") that official Gaelic nursery schooling should be provided, especially where the Authority already makes primary-school Gaelic provision (3.2.vii), though the comment of one respondent has a knell of truth about it: *"if public finance were unlimited. It isn't of course"*. (This respondent is an education officer.) So far Highland Regional Council is alone in having made such provision (cf 3.2.3.4, above) but the logistic difficulties of bringing demographically scattered children together in the cities (*ibid*) and possible tensions between bilingual native populations and monolingual "incomers" in heartland communities (cf 4.20.9ff, below) suggest that there may be good reasons for other regions to consider similar provision as a preparation for primary Gaelic-medium education.

**4.15.8 Perceived optimum language policy within Gaelic play-groups** 77% of the sample believe (as does Comhairle nan Sgoiltean Araich, Scammell, op cit: 24) that if the cròileagan is to be effective Gaelic must be spoken all the time "except, perhaps, in an emergency" (ibid: 3.2.viii) and one comment is even more unequivocal: *"fad na h-ùine - coma leat de dh'èiginn"* ("all the time - never mind the emergency!"). However some respondents disagree, notably among the Western Isles sample, making comments like *"Cha dèan seo ach feadhainn a stiùireadh air falbh"* ("this will only drive some people away") and *"no! this is far too repressive and negative"* (comments from S. Uist and Lewis respectively). It may be that some Island respondents still feel sufficiently confident about the future of the language in their own communities to view the use of Gaelic in the play-group as a valuable, but non-essential source of additional input for children whose bilingualism is already vouchsafed. As has already been discussed at several points above, such confidence may not be entirely justified. On the other hand findings for the remaining questions in this section suggest that special pressures may affect the attitudes of Gaelic speakers in heartland communities (4.15.9ff, below).

**4.15.9 Variations in attitude between Island and Urban sample** In urban areas Gaelic speakers are, on the whole, demographically scattered and thus constrained to create specific contexts for the use of Gaelic. It appears, paradoxically, that this situation can create higher language awareness, and in some situations (e.g. play-groups, meetings etc) greater resistance to code switching for the benefit of non-Gaelic speakers present. Nowadays, however, the Island Gaelic speaker lives more or less permanently in a mixed language situation, and courteous code-switching outwith the family

circle may become an unconscious habit. Thus it has been noted by urban Gaelic play-group workers that "visiting grannies from the Gàidhealtachd are often the worst for speaking English to the children in the *cròileagan*", and the same tendencies are reflected in many comments accompanying this study: e.g. *"tha rud ann ris an can iad mì-mhodh"* ("there is something called impoliteness") and *"dè mu dhèidhinn an duine bochd gun Ghàidhlig?"* ("what about the poor soul without Gaelic?") - both recorded from Lewis respondents (ibid: 28).

4.15.10 That such considerations may cause perceived tension in the community is suggested by comments appearing - sometimes when least expected - throughout the questionnaire. Thus in response to the hypothesis "Difference of language and culture makes hostility arise between people" (ibid: 3.1.iv, op cit above) one respondent agrees strongly, adding *"tha sin ri fhaicinn gu mòr ann an Nis"* ("that is greatly evident in Ness"). And on the subject of providing separate Gaelic-medium primary Units for those who want them (ibid: 3.3.viii, discussed below) a teacher from Lewis asks: *"cò tha 'g iarraidh South Africa eile an seo?"* ("who wants another South Africa here?") It should be emphasised that these are not at all typical comments, but they may indicate some of the difficulties which may be encountered by parents attempting to set up voluntary Gaelic-medium play-groups in small communities (sometimes "in opposition" to, or at least distinct from, an existent English group - 3.3.2.19) and the sensitivity which this situation demands.

4.15.11 The last four questions in this section (ibid, 3.2.ix, x, xi and xii) investigate further what factors are perceived to militate against

the continued use of Gaelic in the community, and how respondents rate them in terms of their threat to the language. The three factors suggested are:

4.15.11.1 (a) "incomers" - i.e. non-Gaelic speakers who move into Gaelic communities, and who may exert a powerful influence on the indigenous culture, as in the parallel situation in Wales (Betts, 1976; Appendix 3, below)

4.15.11.2 (b) the tendency of Gaelic speakers to code-switch in deference to non-Gaelic speakers present (cf 4.20.9, above)

4.15.11.3 (c) the increasing tendency of bilingual parents to speak English to their children even in heartland districts (MacKinnon, 1985: 13-14)

4.15.12 (a) A large majority (82%) of respondents feel that "incomers" should make every effort to support the indigenous language and culture (ibid: 3.2.ix), though one Islands respondent remarks hollowly "can't force them!". However the suggestion that such incomers, "who...try to run things like play-groups in their own way", are a serious threat to Gaelic (ibid: 3.2.x) attracts a much lower percentage agreement (52%). Comments on this proposal include "se cuid de na daoine bhon taobh a muigh as treasa 'n taic na Gàidhlig" ("it's some of these incomers who are strongest in support of Gaelic") and "chan eil càil math a bhith coireachadh dhaoine eile" ("it's no good blaming other people").



4.15.13 (b) The hypothesis that switching to English when in the presence of non-Gaelic speakers is "a bigger threat by far" (ibid: 3.2.xi) attracts 63% agreement from the total sample, and, from those in agreement, comments such as "chan eil seo a' tachairt anns a' Chuimrigh" (*"this doesn't happen in Wales"*), "brain-washed" and "chuala mi seo iomadh uair bho dhaoine a bha airson Gàidhlig ionnsachadh" (*"I have heard this often from people who were trying to learn Gaelic"*) (cf Case Study 10, above).

4.15.14 (c) The final suggestion (that "the laziness of Gaels who speak English to their children will finish the language off however many Gaelic play-groups are run": ibid: 3.2.xii) finds 69% of the total in agreement, and comments such as "This was how I lost Gaelic and had to relearn it in secondary school", "Tha thu aige a-nis!" (*"Now you've got it!"*) and "chan eil càil a bharrachd obrach ann a bhith bruidhinn Gàidhlig" (*"There's no more effort involved in speaking Gaelic"*).

4.15.15 However, when one isolates the response of one specific Island sub-group (53 respondents from Lewis and Harris) a very different picture is revealed (Fig. 10, below). In all three instances the response of the Lewis and Harris sample is markedly higher than that of the rest of the total sample (though the order in which they are rated remains the same). By this process the perceived threat by incoming populations to indigenous culture in the Gàidhealtachd becomes much clearer:

4.15.15.1 FIGURE 10

Variations between Lewis and Harris sample (L/H) and all others in response to possible causes of language erosion:

CAUSE	L/H	OTHERS
(a) "Incomers"	64%	45%
(b) Code-switching	70%	56%
(c) Parents	75%	68%

4.15.16 It would seem imperative that account be taken of underlying sensitivities. Many Welsh speakers have steeled themselves against accusations of discourtesy in speaking their language in the company of non-Welsh speakers. However the present study suggests that a more acceptable objective might be to increase goodwill among "incomers" by consistent information and the provision of adequate second language learning opportunities. This might include a higher degree of tolerance on the part of the native Gaelic speaker towards the halting learner - perceived as a major negative factor by respondents to a recent survey of adult Gaelic learners (Montgomery 1989). As indicated throughout the present thesis, many non-Gaelic speakers are motivated to enrol their children in Gaelic-medium pre-school and primary education programmes. Many have since begun learning the language themselves. It would be ironic indeed if this trend persisted in greater measure among Scots living in cities with small and scattered Gaelic populations than among those who have chosen to live among communities in the heart of the Gàidhealtachd.

4.16 RESULTS: 1.2 GABLIC IN EDUCATION: PRE-SCHOOL

4.16.1 "It is a good thing to send children to a play-group or nursery-school before they go to primary school."

A	B	C	D	E	TOTAL
203	77	21	5	4	310
(65%)	(25%)	(7%)	(2%)	(1%)	

Percentage agreement: 90%

Percentage disagreement: 3%

4.16.ii "The home, mother's knee, is the best 'nursery' of all for young children."

A	B	C	D	E	TOTAL
165	60	39	35	11	310
(53%)	(19%)	(13%)	(11%)	(4%)	

Percentage agreement: 72%

Percentage disagreement: 15%

4.16.iii "Children who expect to go to a Gaelic primary school or unit ought to speak that language in the play-group or nursery they attend."

A	B	C	D	E	TOTAL
161	109	25	14	1	310
(52%)	(35%)	(8%)	(5%)		

Percentage agreement: 87%

Percentage disagreement: 5%

4.16.iv "If children expect to go to an English-medium primary there's no point in their speaking Gaelic at the play-group or nursery they attend."

A	B	C	D	E	TOTAL
9	18	23	85	175	310
(3%)	(6%)	(7%)	(27%)	(56%)	

Percentage agreement: 9%

Percentage disagreement: 83%

4.16.v "Children from Gaelic-speaking homes ought to play with other children in Gaelic so that they will learn to enjoy using the language of their parents."

A	B	C	D	E	TOTAL
154	93	41	13	9	310
(50%)	(30%)	(13%)	(4%)	(3%)	

Percentage agreement: 80%

Percentage disagreement: 7%

4.16.vi "The Gaels ought to run play-groups for themselves if they want them."

A	B	C	D	E	TOTAL
127	95	47	30	11	310
(41%)	(31%)	(15%)	(10%)	(4%)	

Percentage agreement: 72%

Percentage disagreement: 14%

4.16.vii "The authorities.....should provide Gaelic nursery schools wherever they have established Gaelic primary schools or units."

A	B	C	D	E	TOTAL
194	79	29	6	2	310
(63%)	(25%)	(9%)	(2%)	(1%)	

Percentage agreement: 88%

Percentage disagreement: 3%

4.16.viii "If a Gaelic play-group is to be effective Gaelic must be spoken all the time (except perhaps in an emergency) even when there are non-Gaelic speakers present."

A	B	C	D	E	TOTAL
135	102	34	29	10	310
(44%)	(33%)	(11%)	(9%)	(3%)	

Percentage agreement: 77%

Percentage disagreement: 12%

4.16.ix "Parents who move into Highland areas from the outside ought to give every support to Gaelic as the hereditary language of the area."

A	B	C	D	E	TOTAL
151	102	42	13	2	310
(48%)	(33%)	(14%)	(4%)	(1%)	

Percentage agreement: 81%

Percentage disagreement: 5%

4.16.x "People who come from outside and try to run things like play-groups in their own way become one of the greatest threats to Gaelic in Highland communities."

A	B	C	D	E	TOTAL
67	94	78	58	13	310
(22%)	(30%)	(25%)	(19%)	(4%)	

Percentage agreement: 52%

Percentage disagreement: 13%

4.16.xi "The spinelessness of Gaels who turn to English whenever there is even one non-Gaelic speaker in the company is a bigger threat by far."

A	B	C	D	E	TOTAL
95	98	47	50	20	310
(31%)	(32%)	(15%)	(16%)	(6%)	

Percentage agreement: 63%

Percentage disagreement: 22%

4.16.xii "The laziness of Gaels who speak English to their children will finish the language off however many Gaelic play-groups are run."

A	B	C	D	E	TOTAL
102	113	53	32	10	310
(33%)	(36%)	(17%)	(10%)	(3%)	

Percentage agreement: 69%

Percentage disagreement: 13%

#### 4.17 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS: GAELIC IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

4.17.1 Introductory Macillechiar (1985: 28) suggests that "the teaching of Gaelic as a second language, or indeed any language as a 'subject' in school, has been a singular failure", citing the tiny proportion of hours' language exposure this approach permits:

4,17.1.1 "Naturally not even the brightest child can be expected to reach fluency on such a small ration. On the other hand, children attending schools in which the medium for all teaching is the second language achieve high levels of fluency" (ibid).

4.17.2 The circumstances attending the establishment of Gaelic-medium primary units in Scotland have already been fully discussed (3.1ff, above) as has research into the effects of language immersion and L2-medium teaching (2.5, above). Macillechiar (op cit) considers that "the efficacy of such a method is not in doubt". However, that is not to say that its efficacy will necessarily be perceived by the target group - nor that its purported linguistic advantages will be seen to outweigh perceived negative affect as regards other aspects of children's education. It is a revolutionary step forward, not merely pedagogically but also in its radical alteration of the status of Gaelic in mainstream provision - and that at a time when educational legislation at national level is tending towards standardisation of aims, content and assessment. Parental doubt - after centuries in which the language was perceived as non-viable outwith the domestic and social domains - would be understandable at such a

junction - where the entire educational process of the primary school child is at stake.

4.17.3 Teachers also (of whom a large number are represented in the present sample - 4.8.1, above) could be forgiven for having qualms. Their own education and training has yielded little to assist them (linguistically, methodologically or psychologically) in tackling this new teaching concept. Teachers in Comhairle nan Eilean have grown used to using Gaelic as a medium in some (or, in some schools, most) curricular areas. But their work has been essentially a process of bilingual *maintenance* (or at most compensation) rather than an *additive* process for L2 learners (3.2.2.8.1, above). The perceived need for specialist pre-service training is indicated by the high proportion of the sample (including educationists) who suggested (Fig. 11, below) that Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (*The Gaelic College*) should involve itself in this field (Fraser op cit: 103) despite known problems of validation, resource etc within a small island F.E. college:

4.17.3.1 FIGURE 11: suggested curricular content, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig

Course or subject	% of total sample in favour	% of education sub-group in favour
*Primary teacher training	71%	72%
Highland history	70%	
Play-group organisation	66%	
Gaelic learner courses	66%	
*Secondary Gaelic teacher training	65%	65%



4.17.4 Thus the confirmation in this survey of a high degree of overall support for Gaelic-medium primary education seems a significant endorsement of new policies, as does the apparent understanding of the underlying philosophy.

4.17.5 Perceived importance of education in language maintenance 72% of the sample believe that Gaelic will go out of existence unless children are taught through the medium of Gaelic - at least in the primary school (Fraser, op cit: 3.3.iv). It is noteworthy that the percentage of adults living in Lewis and Harris who agree with this prognosis is even higher - 75% (ibid: 41) - despite the relative strength of Gaelic as a community language in this area. Only a tiny handful of Lewis children were involved in official, fully Gaelic-medium primary education programmes at the time this survey was carried out (3.3.2.7.1 and 2, above), so one may interpret such findings as, to some extent, endorsement of Comhairle nan Eilean's mainstream bilingual policy. However subsequent increasing parental demand for the establishment of Gaelic-medium units (effectively "opting out" of the bilingual system, at least for the initial two years of primary schooling - 3.3.2.3, above) suggests that the extent of Gaelic-medium education enjoyed by children in the mainstream is seen by some as inadequate to maintain the language.

4.17.6 77% of the total sample disagree that Gaelic-medium education is non-viable in a modern, English-dominant world (Fraser, op cit: 3,3,i) and the educationists are even more supportive: 83% of the sub-group (cf Fig. 13, below). It is, therefore, hardly surprising that 88% disagree that

"Gaelic primary education is a waste of money", notwithstanding financial stringency in education generally (ibid: 3.3ii) - (educationists: 88%, Fig. 13), nor that 85% believe the Government should promote Gaelic primary education *regardless of cost* (ibid: 3.3.v) or at least, as one diplomatic respondent suggested "*on a par with support for Welsh*" (ibid: 33).

4.17.7 Perceptions regarding the practical implementation of Gaelic-medium primary education Teacher training is recognised as a priority by 87% of the total sample (ibid: 3.3.x), though the practitioners themselves seem slightly more self-confident (educationist sub-group: 83% in agreement, Fig. 13). The suggestion that children's progress may suffer owing to lack of appropriate Gaelic resource material gains general disagreement, though feelings are less certain on this point, indicating a level of concern among some respondents: 73% of the overall sample disagree, dropping to 70% in Skye and 65% in the Southern Isles. However it may be that fears on this point are exaggerated unnecessarily: among the practitioners who implement the policies 80% disagree with this proposition. A high proportion (89%) of the sample agree that growing demand is the most effective route to increased resource-production (ibid: 3.3.vi).

4.17.8 On the other hand there seems to be a rather more prevalent sense that the Gaelic language itself may be intrinsically inadequate to cope with the demands of cross-curricular teaching: only 56% of the total sample (58% of the educationist sub-group) disagree with the proposition (put half in jest by the researcher) that full-time Gaelic-medium education is impossible due to the inherent lexical limitations of the language (ibid: 3.3.ix), though adults in Lewis and Harris (presumably

more used to utilising the language across a range of situations) demonstrate less qualms: 64% in disagreement. Perhaps this is less surprising in the light of Gaelic history (1.2 above) which has subliminally taught successive generations of Gaelic-speakers that their language is too "primitive" for use in the "important" areas of life; as a direct corollary this sample's own educational experience (and training, in the case of teachers) has been English-medium, leaving them less able to contemplate "choosing-time" and "the months of the year" through Gaelic, let alone "multiple fractions" and "the countries of the world". Obviously Gaelic education as a compensatory process includes the creation and/or familiarisation of new expressions and terminology (viz the Gaelic electronic data-base which has emerged naturally out of Sabhal Mòr Ostaig's developmental work in business study and information technology and the prerequisite of "consistency in terminology" in computer software for primary schools: Primary Review Group, 1989). Many comments appended to the present survey acknowledge this - representing lexical limitation as at worst a temporary phenomenon which is already being rectified through increased usage, consultation and a certain amount of judicious borrowing.

#### 4.17.9 Perceived long-term linguistic effects of Gaelic primary education

Two questions (3.3.xi and 3.3.xii) attempted to address an issue which is related - but more subtle - perhaps too subtle, on reflection, for presentation within the context of a multiple-choice questionnaire: the possibility that extension of Gaelic-usage into all modern situations may inadvertently dilute or destroy the very thing it seeks to promote: as one poetic elderly respondent puts it "A' Ghàidhlig, a h-àilleachd, a riarachas mar chànan, a thuilleadh air a ceòl is air a dualchas" ("Gaelic - its

*beauty, its piquancy as a language, in addition to its music and its tradition*"). This topic now seems prophetic in the light of debate currently raging over proposed changes in the counting system of Gaelic, designed to simplify computation in primary schools ("**NO GARLIC COUNTING BUT NOBODY CONSULTED**" - Stornoway Gazette, 7.10.89). Gaelic counts in scores: thus 120 is "sia fichead" ("*six twenties*") - a concept quite assimilable by small children in dealing with cardinal number-lines, but a considerable problem in terms of on-paper base-10 place-value calculation. Some teachers are highly resistant to the idea of adopting anglo-European decimal numeration - and, one suspects, the general Gaelic-speaking population will be even more resistant when the first Gaelic-medium educated child presents a shopkeeper with "ochd deich sgillinn" ("*eight tens of pence*") instead of "ceithir fichead sgillinn" ("*four-score pence*"). Yet it is unrealistic to hope that the language can survive as the pellucid expression of a rural way of life if it is to reflect the needs, interests and sub-culture of modern youth. It seems essential that this be recognised at an early stage in order to avoid counter-productive criticism of the efforts of the school and, more importantly, the child (cf Case Studies 8 and 11, above for evidence that this may already be happening).

4.17.10 On the one hand translation and standardisation of accepted English school terms and methodology seems bound to some extent to blur some of the finer points of conceptual distinction intrinsic to Gaelic and may lose them irrevocably for the next generation (another argument for Gaelic-medium teacher-training); on the other hand failure to consolidate the language through extensive usage in the education system seems even more conducive of "vulgar Gaelic", as incapable of producing another

Somhairle MacLean as Latin was of producing another Catullus. The paradox seems to be recognised by 67% of the present sample who disagree with the hypothesis - despite justifiable complaints as to its semantics - that *"If people begin to use Gaelic for subjects which are alien to the way of life of the Gael, Gaelic will be devalued and diluted"* (3.3.xi). It is also acknowledged implicitly in comments to the counter-suggestion that *"there's no point in keeping Gaelic alive as a traditional language which cannot adapt to every situation which arises in the twentieth century"* (ibid, 3.3.xii) - e.g. *"Mura cleachdar i 's a h-uile suidheachadh chan fhàs i idir"* (*"if it's not used in every situation it won't develop at all"*) - though percentage results are discounted, owing to the clumsy wording, which invited two shades of affirmative response, viz. *"'S d' fhiach a cumail beò agus a cleachdadh 's a h-uile suidheachdadh"* (*"It's worth keeping alive and using in every situation"*).

4.17.11 Attitudes towards long-term effects upon the community As to how this groundswell of support (in principle) for the concept of Gaelic-medium education may be realised practically in future, responses to (a) 3.3.vii and (b) 3.3.viii seem even more relevant than when the original Report was written:

4.17.11.1 (a) whether this sample considers it expedient to establish separate, optional Gaelic schools or units rather than to make limited Gaelic provision available to all children regardless of interest and motivation (3.3.vii) and

4.17.11.2 (b) whether this sample believes that the advantages, in linguistic terms, of specialist Gaelic-medium education programmes would be outweighed by their possibly divisive effects within the community - which again seems somewhat prophetic in the light, for example, of the reaction of a small but vocal non-indigenous minority in Tiree - cf 4.13.4.1, above).

4.17.12 At the time of responding, opinion was more divided over these questions than any other (Fraser op cit: 34). Although (a) 58% of the sample felt that separate Gaelic-medium schools or units were preferable and (b) only 27% thought they might be divisive, comments indicated that the adoption of this model, as perceived by many respondents, would deprive large numbers of children of a valuable introduction to Gaelic culture. Additionally it transpired, on further analysis, that potential divisiveness tended to be perceived by respondents themselves living in small Gàidhealtachd communities (ibid). There is little doubt that feelings can run high in some communities during the first phase of establishment of a Gaelic Unit, but these usually hinge around practical, rather than philosophical considerations - accommodation in the school, teacher-pupil ratio in the school as a whole (in small schools the balance may be radically disturbed by the establishment of a small separately-staffed specialist Unit) etc. However schools and individuals have typically adjusted swiftly to the new circumstances as the community becomes familiar with the aims of such schemes and their equal application and availability to Gaelic-speaker and non-Gaelic speaker alike. Comhairle nan Eilean has recently reaffirmed its intention to respond to parental demand wherever practical and is currently researching the implications of recent

developments in terms of its established mainstream bilingual provision (CEUM Conference on Provision for Minority Languages, Stornoway, 4 - 6th October, 1989). The training of its primary school teachers in second-language teaching methods would seem to be the single most important factor in allaying fears of "apartheid" between indigenous and "incoming" populations in small communities.

4.17.13 Comparative research suggests time and again that a prime organisational factor of HDS ("high degree of success") bilingual programmes is "the availability of alternative programmes" (Skuttnab Kangas, op cit: 22ff). Thus, it is suggested, when *everyone* is forced to learn wholly or predominantly through the medium of the same language in a bilingual or multilingual situation, *someone* is bound to lose out: the Finnish-Swede, the Puerto Rican or the Gaelic-speaker in dominant language "submersion" programmes; the non-Irish speaker (not to mention, ultimately, the Irish language) under the compulsory Gaelic policies of the past (Macnamara, op cit). Yet as with all educational developments a complex interplay of related factors must be taken into account. Just as the Puerto Rican child's bilingualism is no longer seen as the cause of his scholastic under-achievement (Iiams, op cit: 259 - 260), so uninspired teaching rather than compulsion may transpire to have wrought the most damage upon Irish bilingual education. It will be interesting to discover whether the children in Gwynedd's all-Welsh scheme (Appendix 3), with its foundations firmly rooted in best practice, will bear a burden of antagonism towards the indigenous language when they grow up as have many of their earlier Irish counterparts.

4.18 RESULTS: GAELIC IN EDUCATION: PRIMARY SCHOOL

4.14.1 "It's all very well teaching Gaelic as a primary school subject, but as English is so important throughout the world it's a piece of nonsense to teach children through the medium of Gaelic."

A	B	C/?	D	E	TOTAL
12	31	28	96	143	310
(4%)	(10%)	(9%)	(31%)	(46%)	

Percentage agreement: 14%

Percentage disagreement: 77%

4.18.11 "Considering how short of money the primary schools are it's a disgraceful waste of money to spend it on Gaelic education."

A	B	C/?	D	E	TOTAL
10	7	19	76	198	310
(3%)	(2%)	(6%)	(25%)	(64%)	

Percentage agreement: 5%

Percentage disagreement: 89%



4.18.iii "Considering the scarcity of Gaelic books and teaching-materials it will endanger children's education to teach through the medium of Gaelic."

A	B	C/?	D	E	TOTAL
21	36	26	114	113	310
(7%)	(12%)	(8%)	(37%)	(36%)	

Percentage agreement: 19%

Percentage disagreement: 73%

4.18.iv "As English is in a position of such strength Gaelic is going to go out of existence if children don't have Gaelic-medium education, at least in the primary school."

A	B	C/?	D	E	TOTAL
104	119	34	45	8	310
(34%)	(38%)	(11%)	(15%)	(3%)	

Percentage agreement: 72%

Percentage disagreement: 18%

4.18.v "Following generations of neglect it's high time the authorities gave every encouragement to Gaelic education, regardless of cost."

A	B	C/?	D	E	TOTAL
185	77	22	23	2	310
(60%)	(25%)	(7%)	(7%)	(1%)	

Percentage agreement: 85%

Percentage disagreement: 8%

4.18.vi "The more Gaelic primary schools are established the easier it will become to get books and teaching materials produced."

A	B	C/?	D	E	TOTAL
172	99	27	9	3	310
(55%)	(32%)	(9%)	(3%)	(1%)	

Percentage agreement: 87%

Percentage disagreement: 4%

4.18.vii "It would be better to teach some children through the medium of Gaelic in separate units or schools than to give a little Gaelic to every child in the primary whether they wanted it or not."

A	B	C/?	D	E	TOTAL
68	111	59	56	16	310
(22%)	(36%)	(19%)	(18%)	(5%)	

Percentage agreement: 58%

Percentage disagreement: 23%

4.18.viii "Separate Gaelic units would create divisions within families and communities."

A	B	C/?	D	E	TOTAL
17	69	70	111	43	310
(5%)	(22%)	(23%)	(36%)	(14%)	

Percentage agreement: 27%

Percentage disagreement: 50%

4.18.ix "Children can't learn through the medium of Gaelic full-time, as appropriate vocabulary does not exist for some of the subjects they receive in the primary school."

A	B	C/?	D	E	TOTAL
18	69	48	106	69	310
(6%)	(22%)	(15%)	(34%)	(22%)	

Percentage agreement: 28%

Percentage disagreement: 56%

4.18.x "Instead of saying that certain subjects are hard to teach through the medium of Gaelic, the authorities ought to give appropriate training to teachers who are involved in Gaelic-medium education."

A	B	C/?	D	E	TOTAL
160	110	16	17	7	310
(52%)	(35%)	(5%)	(5%)	(2%)	

Percentage agreement: 87%

Percentage disagreement: 7%

4.18.xi "If people begin to use Gaelic for subjects which are alien to the way of life and philosophy of the Gael, Gaelic will be devalued and diluted."

A	B	C/?	D	E	TOTAL
19	34	52	102	103	310
(6%)	(11%)	(17%)	(33%)	(33%)	

Percentage agreement: 17%

Percentage disagreement: 66%

4.18.x11 "There's no point in keeping Gaelic alive as a traditional language which cannot adapt to every situation that arises in the twentieth century."

A	B	C/?	D	E	TOTAL
66	66	37	78	53	310
(21%	(21%	(12%	(25%	(17%	

Percentage agreement: 42%

Percentage disagreement: 42%

#### 4.19 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS: GAELIC IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL

4.19.1 **Introductory** Despite the rapid decline of Gaelic as a spoken community language over the last century, the situation of Gaelic at primary school level is arguably more healthy than at any other stage in its history. The converse seems true of Gaelic at secondary level. There is a sharp decline, from primary to secondary, in numbers of pupils in receipt of some form of Gaelic education, as demonstrated in Fig. 12, below, and the situation seems likely further to deteriorate in face of recent Ministerial recommendations as regards the teaching of languages in Scottish secondary schools (cf 4.19.3, below).

4.19.1.1 **FIGURE 12: Numbers in receipt of Gaelic education, 1985**

	Primary	Secondary
Overall number of schools	167	42
Schools providing for native speakers	75	20
Pupils receiving instruction as native speakers	1,145	815
Pupils receiving instruction as learners	6,510	2,196
Pupils taught other subjects via Gaelic	1,332	248
Teachers teaching Gaelic	314	78
Teachers teaching through Gaelic	166	11

Source: Annual School Census (quoted SCCC, 1988: 22)

4.19.2 Fig. 12 does not take into account statistics for the subsequently established Gaelic-medium Primary Units furth of Comhairle nan Eilean, which, though small-scale, further increase the gap between primary provision and secondary uptake. The Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum (SCCC) explains the reasons for low secondary uptake as follows:

4.19.2.1 "In the first place Gaelic has traditionally been regarded as a contender (sometimes after S1) with other modern languages for curriculum time, whilst, at the same time, importance has been attached to the principle that Gaelic speaking pupils should have unimpeded access to foreign language provision. It has proved difficult to resolve the resultant timetabling problems at the S1-S2 stage. Secondly the continuation into the secondary stage of current bilingual primary stage developments has encountered predictable difficulties arising from the structure of secondary curriculum" (SCCC, *op cit*: 8).

4.19.3 Sympathetic official attitudes generally go no further than acknowledging inevitable "problems" and "difficulties" inherent in finding a place for Gaelic in an already crowded timetable, though there may, in 1989, be reason to hope that more official effort may be expended in solving these difficulties (cf 4.19.5.1, below). The SCCC's statement is in marked contrast to the same document's stance on "foreign" languages (it is left open to debate whether this category might, on a technicality, be extended to include Learners' Gaelic courses - but Native Speakers' Gaelic would clearly be excluded on any definition):

4.19.3.1 "The SCCC therefore concludes that full courses in a first foreign language should continue to start from S1 and be a required component of the curriculum for the first two years of secondary education for all pupils..." (ibid: 7)

4.19.4 At present all pupils in schools throughout the Western Isles study Gaelic in S1 and S2, and Strathclyde Regional Council is currently experimenting with a similar strategy for S1 pupils in designated secondaries in Argyll. In other Scottish schools in which Gaelic is offered it has traditionally been timetabled against French (Dunn and Robertson, 1989: 46), an option which has traditionally been considered to be an essential preliminary to the study of further languages. This situation has been far from ideal, as suggested by the low uptake (4.19.2.1, above). However recent decisions on language teaching nationally would seem to put even more pressure on Gaelic in future. The Scottish Office has recently recommended that the study of "at least one modern European foreign language" should be compulsory for all pupils "during the 4 years of compulsory schooling", but Gaelic is excluded from this "core" (cf Appendices 3 and 4 for discussion of parallel situation in Wales and Northern Ireland):

4.19.4.1 "Throughout these four years of secondary education pupils should also be given an opportunity and encouragement to study an additional language, whether a modern foreign language, a classical language, Gaelic or an Asian language" (SED, Circular 1178, 1989: 2).

4.19.5 The Minister "acknowledges that difficulties can arise in fitting Gaelic into an already crowded timetable, but he believes these can be resolved" (ibid: 3). In a letter to Comunn na Gàidhlig, a Scottish Office spokesperson agrees that Gaelic is being treated differently from Welsh in Wales and Irish in Northern Ireland in this matter, but "is confident that...Gaelic can be maintained and promoted in a way that befits an integral part of Scotland's heritage":

4.19.5.1 "he has now asked HM Inspectorate to examine possible timetable structures with a view to drawing up and circulating for the benefit of education authorities and schools exemplars of how the various demands can be reconciled" (Scottish Office, 2.11.89).

4.19.6 Gaelic as a medium of education in the secondary school The SCCC recognises the "complex demands made by a language which may be the mother tongue, second language or 'foreign' language and is the living tongue of an indigenous community" (SCCC, op cit: 14). Among children who are already bilingual upon entry to the secondary it might seem more appropriate (and expedient, in face of timetabling pressures) to treat Gaelic as parallel to English rather than French - as a First Language, a medium through which literature (its own and others), social sciences and the arts, can be transmitted, rather than as a discrete Second language to be learned from scratch. Comhairle nan Eilean's Bilingual Primary Policy has not as yet made the inroads into secondary education which were hoped, indeed expected of it (Dunn and Robertson, op cit: 46ff). At the time when logical progression could have been made in the development of bilingual courses and material resources for children entering related secondary schools, the



continuity was broken by the SED's requirement of evaluation of the project thus far. In the resultant report (Mitchell, MacIntyre, MacDonald, McLennan: *"Report of an independent evaluation of the Western Isles Bilingual Education Project"*, University of Stirling, 1987) the project was adjudged to be broadly successful, its policies desirable, and attitudes of parents and teachers generally supportive, with evidence of regret that the policies were not continued at secondary level. However, so far only two junior secondary schools in Lewis (Shawbost and Lionel) are involved to any significant extent in Gaelic-medium practice, teaching social subjects and Celtic Studies (Dunn and Robertson, op cit: 46) as an extension or formalisation of Gaelic interrelation between pupil and teacher which would seem natural (unless actively inhibited) in a bilingual community.

4.19.7 In Glasgow, where eight children from the Bilingual Unit of Sir John Maxwell Primary entered secondary school in August 1988, Strathclyde Regional Council wasted no time in planning relevant provision, which includes two specially recruited members of staff, a Gaelic-medium registration class, Gaelic (as a subject) timetabled so that both French and German may be studied if desired, and the development of Gaelic-medium teaching in the Social Sciences - a History course is in preparation and has already been recognised in principle by the Scottish Examination Board as examinable at Standard Grade level through the medium of Gaelic. These seem extremely positive steps within an urban context, catering for such small numbers, and at a time of rationalisation and standardisation in terms of educational management and curricular policy. Highland Regional Council's policy statement on Gaelic education indicates that it intends to take similar steps to cater for the first secondary intake from Gaelic-

medium Primary Units within its Region in August 1992 (Highland Regional Council: 1986).

**4.19.8 Attitudes towards Gaelic-medium secondary teaching** At the time when the present survey was conducted it was predicted that these would be considerably less positive than attitudes towards Gaelic-medium pre-school and primary education, owing to the relative difficulty of adapting existent educational resources and to the association of secondary education with vocational and Higher Educational aspirations. This prediction was not borne out by some of the results. 76% of the total sample agree with the strongly worded statement that "fluent speakers, who have already had Gaelic-medium education in the primary school, should learn every subject through the medium of Gaelic if they so desire, as soon as courses are ready for them" (Fraser, op cit: 3.4.11). This seems a high level of support for the concept of across-the-board Gaelic-medium education in the secondary school, and the attitudes of educationists are similarly positive (Fig. 13, below).

**4.19.9 Teacher training** is again acknowledged as an important priority - 77% consider that secondary teachers should be trained forthwith in Gaelic-medium teaching methods, in addition to the identification of appropriate Gaelic-medium assessment mechanisms, as in Wales (ibid, 3.4.1v). 61% of the sample disagree that the political situation in Scotland is so different from that in Wales as to brook comparison (ibid, 3.4.v) (compare "nearly 80% of Welsh schools currently offer the subject. That is very different from the position in Scotland" - Scottish Office, 2.11.89, op

cit). 65% agree that the Gaels should make every effort to change the political climate as the Welsh have done (ibid, 3.4.vi).

4.19.10 Perceived effects of bilingual secondary education 63% of the total sample disagree that Gaelic-medium education would adversely affect pupils' performance in examinations (ibid, 3.4.iii). Although only 55% go so far as to agree that Gaelic-medium teaching would give pupils an added advantage "in a world where everyone speaks English anyway" (ibid, 3.4.ix) (adding comments such as "*It will give them more confidence and imaginative freedom*" and "*Their minds ought to be broader anyway*" - ibid: 45) this result seems to have been affected by the wording of the statement: a proportion of respondents seem to have disagreed with the parenthesis re the universality of English, rather than with the suggested advantages of bilingualism. It may be, however, that a need exists for wider dissemination of information gained through recent research into the effects of bilingualism on cognitive development (3.5, above).

4.19.11 Conclusions Considering the adverse factors indicated above (4.19.3ff) these findings seem to indicate significant overall popular support for the principle of Gaelic-medium secondary education, and, perhaps to some extent, to confirm popular frustration at the restriction to the primary stage of the Western Isles Bilingual Project (4.19.6, above). It is also noteworthy that some of the personnel who would be directly involved in the fuller implementation of this challenging policy are among those in favour of it (Fig. 13, below): it has seemed appropriate for the purposes of this study to isolate the responses of educationists to

certain key questions for comparison: from these results it will be seen that the response of educationists (teachers, officials, lecturers etc - 4.8, above) correlate to a high degree with the overall responses to most key questions regarding secondary school Gaelic education, and are, if anything, slightly higher as regards (a) the need for Gaelic-medium secondary teacher training and examination mechanisms (Fraser, op cit: 3.4.iv) and (b) the relationship between the low status of Gaelic in the secondary curriculum and low pupil uptake (ibid: 3.4.vii, below).

4.19.12 In the light of well-publicised developments regarding compulsory "Modern" Language teaching (4.19.4ff, above) - which have emerged since the questionnaire was circulated - it may be argued that, if anything, attitudes of educationists may have become stronger rather than weaker in the interim. A straw poll conducted unofficially in Highland Region is believed to have revealed grave doubts among secondary school Headteachers throughout the Region as to their ability to continue properly to accommodate Gaelic within the newly-defined curricular limits. The classification of Gaelic as a "heritage" language of peripheral importance is unlikely to encourage uptake even where appropriate timetabling and staffing is engineered by determined HT's. An increase in Gaelic-medium instruction across other curricular areas would be one obvious way both of improving the status of the language and of increasing its usage without loss of other educational opportunities to the pupil. In turn this has major implications in terms of teacher training, resource development and national assessment - a factor which seems recognised by a large majority of the present sample, including educationists (Fraser, op cit: 3.4.vii; fig. 13, below).

4.20 FIGURE 13 Attitudes of "educationists" sub-group (ESG)

Proposal	Overall %		ESG	Others
	Agree	Disagree		
1, PRE-SCHOOL				
3,2,vii <i>Authorities should provide Gaelic nurseries</i>	88%		92%	86%
3,2,viii <i>Gaelic should be used all the time in the cròileagan</i>	76%		84%	73%
2, PRIMARY SCHOOL				
3,3,i <i>Folly to teach via Gaelic at primary level</i>	77%		83%	73%
3,3,ii <i>Gaelic-medium primary education a waste of money</i>	89%		88%	90%
3,3,iii <i>Children's education would suffer; lack of Gaelic resources</i>	73%		80%	68%
3,3,vi <i>Increased demand will create supply of resources</i>	87%		89%	87%
3,3,vii <i>Separate Gaelic-medium education for some preferable to some Gaelic for all</i>	58%		54%	61%
3,3,ix <i>Full-time Gaelic-medium education impractical; lexical limitations of language</i>	56%		58%	55%
3,3,x <i>Instead of suggesting Gaelic limited, authorities should provide appropriate teacher training</i>	87%		83%	89%
3, SECONDARY SCHOOL				
3,4,ii <i>Fluent Gaelic speakers with bilingual primary experience should learn all subjects via Gaelic ASAP - if desired</i>	76%		76%	76%
3,4,iii <i>Across the board Gaelic-medium education would adversely affect success in examinations</i>	62%		63%	62%
3,4,iv <i>Authorities should provide appropriate teacher training and examination mechanisms - as in Wales</i>	78%		80%	77%
3,4,vii <i>Low status of Gaelic has depressed secondary uptake</i>	67%		70%	66%
3,4,ix <i>Everyone speaks English - so bilingually educated pupils have an added advantage</i>	55%		55%	55%
4, TEACHER TRAINING				
7,2 <i>If I ran Sabhal Mòr Ostaig I would provide (a) primary training</i>	71%		72%	71%
(b) secondary "	65%		65%	65%

4.21 RESULTS: GAELIC IN EDUCATION: SECONDARY SCHOOL

4.21.i "It's all very well speaking Gaelic to children in the primary school, but when they reach the age of twelve it's time for them to turn their backs on the narrow world of home and family."

A	B	C/?	D	E	TOTAL
11	10	19	76	194	310
4%	3%	6%	25%	63%	

Percentage agreement: 7%

Percentage disagreement: 88%

4.21.ii "Fluent speakers, who have already had Gaelic-medium education in the primary school, should learn every subject through the medium of Gaelic if they so desire, as soon as courses are ready for them."

A	B	C/?	D	E	TOTAL
130	105	30	39	6	310
42%	34%	10%	13%	2%	

Percentage agreement: 7%

Percentage disagreement: 88%

4.21.iii "It's all very well teaching Gaelic as a secondary school subject, but it would jeopardise children's performance in exams if they learned other subjects through the medium of Gaelic"

A	B	C/?	D	E	TOTAL
13	47	55	107	88	310
4%	15%	18%	35%	28%	

Percentage agreement: 19%

Percentage disagreement: 63%

4.21.iv "Instead of saying that it will keep children back to learn through the medium of Gaelic, the authorities ought to give appropriate training to teachers and prepare Gaelic-medium exam papers, as they have done in Wales."

A	B	C/?	D	E	TOTAL
145	95	38	25	7	310
47%	31%	12%	8%	2%	

Percentage agreement: 78%

Percentage disagreement: 10%

4.21.v "It's inappropriate to compare Scottish Gaelic to Welsh - the political situation is very different, and it can't be changed."

A	B	C/?	D	E	TOTAL
15	35	71	106	83	310
6%	11%	23%	34%	27%	

Percentage agreement: 17%

Percentage disagreement: 61%

4.21.vi "The Gaels ought to strive to change the political situation, using their language as their flagship, just as the Welsh did with theirs."

A	B	C/?	D	E	TOTAL
117	86	70	26	11	310
38%	28%	23%	8%	3%	

Percentage agreement: 66%

Percentage disagreement: 11%

4.21.vii "Gaelic has been a secondary school subject for many years, but the numbers who have chosen it in preference to French prove that there is insufficient interest to justify increasing Gaelic education."

A	B	C/?	D	E	TOTAL
19	37	60	123	71	310
6%	12%	19%	40%	23%	

Percentage agreement: 18%

Percentage disagreement: 63%

4.21.viii "It is not lack of interest in Gaelic that has held it back as a secondary school subject, but the low status of the language in general (compared with a big "important" language like French)."

A	B	C/?	D	E	TOTAL
94	115	57	25	9	310
30%	37%	18%	8%	3%	

Percentage agreement: 67%

Percentage disagreement: 11%

4.21.ix "In a world where everyone speaks English anyway, young people who learn through the medium of Gaelic are getting an extra advantage over those who learn the same subjects through English."

A	B	C/?	D	E	TOTAL
74	96	71	58	11	310
24%	31%	23%	19%	4%	

Percentage agreement: 55%

Percentage disagreement: 23%



4.21.x "Young people have different needs depending on where they live, and education ought to take account of these needs."

A	B	C/?	D	E	TOTAL
110	141	39	16	4	310
35%	45%	13%	5%	1%	

Percentage agreement: 80%

Percentage disagreement: 6%

4.21.xi "The Government are suggesting that all young people throughout the country should have the same, uniform education, but this argument is based not on young people's needs but on cutting costs."

A	B	C/?	D	E	TOTAL
91	123	48	29	19	310
29%	40%	15%	9%	6%	

Percentage agreement: 69%

Percentage disagreement: 15%

#### 4.22 DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS: EDUCATIONAL CONSTRUCTS

4.22.1 Introduction Sections 4.1 - 4.3 of the original Report (Fraser, *op cit*) *Educational Constructs and Priorities*, attempted to discover the general educational constructs of respondents in relation to each stage of the educational process (i.e. pre-school - secondary) without specific reference to Gaelic education. It was felt that this might provide some useful insight with which to review results in previous sections. Gaelic education has been perceived in some quarters as a largely sentimental or even reactionary exercise: one parental group had to convince their local authority that they were not merely using Gaelic as an excuse to win for their children a "comfortable middle-class education - private education without the fees" (3.2.2.3, above). In some parts of Wales it has been suggested that a proportion of parents opt for Welsh-medium schools on social rather than cultural or educational grounds - perhaps in the expectation that such schools will provide a more formal, traditional approach to education, discipline etc (Appendix 3, below). Yet Welsh and Scottish educationists generally strive to present the indigenous languages within a context of best practice - modern child-centred methodology, classroom organisation, class management, resource development etc.

4.22.2 Respondents were therefore presented with lists of possible "ingredients" or components in random order and asked to rank them on a scale from A (*essential*) to E (*not at all important*) at each stage.

4.22.3 Throughout the following results the total sample was slightly smaller (304): five of the respondents gave up at the end of the first

section, presumably because they found the exercise too time-consuming, and one for the following reason:

4.22.3.1 "Cha robh mi riamh ann an àrd-sgoil. Mar sin chan urrainn dhomh na ceistean sin a fhreagairt. Faodaidh mi ràdh nach deach Gàidhlig a riamh a theagasg dhomh." (*"I was never in secondary school. Thus I can't answer these questions. I might add, Gaelic was never taught to me either"*).

4.22.4 In the tables that follow A and B responses (*"essential"* and *"very important"*) have been totalled for convenience, and in order to highlight variations - by no means so wide as in other sections: thus several correspondents simply replied *"essential"* to all the listed components.

4.22.5 FIGURE 14: educational constructs: Pre-school (nursery or play-group)

1. Fun and pleasure (87%)
2. Taking part and sharing with other children (85%)
3. New words and concepts (84%)
4. Learning to be polite (69%)
5. A chance for the mothers to meet and talk (63%)
6. A little counting (62%)
7. Learning to be neat and tidy (59%)
8. A little reading and writing (56%)
9. A chance to make a mess.... (50%)
10. Learning to sit quietly (40%)
11. Chance for mothers to get peace from the children (40%)

4.22.7 Other suggestions: Stories, self-confidence, drama, health and safety, helping mum, creative play, independence, social skills, music

4.22.8 Comments "Learning through play" is a fairly new concept, and one with which it is harder to identify the more formal the educational experience of the adult him/herself. It can be assumed that few of the present sample have had any form of first-hand pre-school educational experience. Yet the sample paint a happy overall picture of small children gaining conceptual and social development through interrelation and games, and though the basis for reading, writing and counting may be established in the nursery (through rhymes, jigsaws, sorting etc,) it is rightly perceived by this sample as less important as an end in itself

4.22.9 On the other hand being "polite" and "neat and tidy" are seen as more important than "making the kind of mess they couldn't make at home". The wording here may have confused the issue - one respondent asked "Why couldn't they make a mess at home?" Perhaps the children of the Gàidhealtachd enjoy more space and freedom than their counterparts elsewhere. Certainly the relatively low priority given to "opportunities for mothers" indicates that this sample still expects more full-time maternal commitment than is often afforded to pre-school children in a society whose women increasingly claim the right to return to work soon after the birth of their children and to whom pre-school nursery provision is essential. The deliberate use of the word "mother" instead of "parent" throughout the pre-school sections of the questionnaire evoked only the most occasional protest: male-female rôle models still seem firmly

entrenched - an impression reinforced by subsequent results in the original Report.

4.22.10 FIGURE 15: educational constructs: Primary-school

1. Taking an interest in a wide variety of things (89%)
2. The three R's (86%)
3. Spelling (85%)
Spoken language skills (85%)
Knowledge of one's own environment (85%)
6. Learning to be kind to others (84%)
Gaining information from books (84%)
Forming one's own opinions (84%)
9. Pleasure (81%)
Knowledge of other environments (81%)
11. Music (78%)
12. Neat tidy work (75%)
13. Art (72%)
14. Drama (70%)
15. Discipline and good manners (68%)
16. Computing (67%)
17. Games and P.E. (66%)
18. Memorising information (65%)
19. Writing poems and stories (63%)
20. One's own religion (55%)
21. Other faiths (44%)

4.22.11 Other suggestions: cooperating with peers, imagination, history, communicative skills, kindness to animals, diligence, self-confidence, tradition, learning how to learn, appreciation of life.

4.22.12 Comments Again, the overall picture is one which recognises that motivation and discipline arise naturally from the interest and pleasure of the educational process: "taking a wide interest" is ranked above the three R's, and "pleasure" and "kindness to others" considerably higher than

"discipline and good manners" per se. The sample obviously expects the primary school to offer a sound grounding in formal skills, but no more importance is placed on these than on exploration of the environment, both local and beyond.

4.22.13 The importance of "discovery" by children is acknowledged: "information from books" is ranked almost 20% higher than "memorising information". This seems to represent both approbation of modern teaching methods and reinforcement of the *cri de coeur* for more published material implicit in earlier responses (4.17.7, above). There is a lack of all types of children's book, but in a primary school context the need for a full range of reference material is especially urgent. Considering the high proportion of teachers in this sample, these results indicate the practical dilemma faced constantly in Gaelic education: how to minimise formal methods and substitute a variety of organisational contexts (individual, group etc) when there are few resources to which the children may be directed; how to encourage independent thinking, opinion formation etc when the teacher is virtually the only source of information-through-Gaelic available to the children.

4.22.14 The relatively low prioritisation of creative writing is surprising (cf Appendix 3 for description of educational policy in Wales as regards writing) and computing generally plays a greater part in the primary curriculum than is recognised here - especially in some Gaelic Units - as a valuable method of "learning-through-pleasure" and a relatively easily-produced alternative to published material. Perhaps one might have predicted a higher response in favour of making children -

- especially those in the upper primary-school - aware of "other faiths": results and comments in earlier sections would indicate a high level of awareness in this sample that such understanding enhances understanding of one's own culture while encouraging tolerance towards others.

4.22.15 But in general these results represent a set of basic educational priorities with which, one suspects, few educationists would argue, except perhaps the P.E. instructor who comments plaintively that "*the Gaels think P.E. is a joke*": since the original Report was written the rôle of physical education has been increasingly acknowledged by Gaelic-medium teachers as an important source of linguistic and conceptual input, and Gaelic-speaking instructors such as the above-quoted increasingly involved as visiting teachers to Gaelic Units as indicated in section 3.2, above.



4.22.16: FIGURE 16: educational constructs: Secondary School

1. Using one's own language creatively (91%)	
2. Knowledge of one's own culture (90%)	
3. Geog/hist of one's own country (88%)	
4. Rules of one's own language (82%)	
5. Computing (80%)	
6. Foundation for livelihood (79%)	
Friendships (79%)	
Foundation for happy home-life (79%)	
9. Success in examinations (78%)	
Geog/hist of other countries (78%)	
11. Other languages (76%)	
12. Hobbies (73%)	
13. The Arts (72%)	
14. Knowledge of other cultures (70%)	
15. P.E. and sport (66%)	
16. Political understanding (59%)	

4.22.17 Other suggestions: debating and reasoning skills, independent thought, self-confidence, foreign visits, outdoor pursuits, modern literature, sexual equality, logical thinking, the sciences, socialisation, responsibility and decision-making, public speaking

4.22.18 Comments Perhaps the single most striking thing about these findings is the importance with which the present sample invests the transmission of local (or national) knowledge and culture - "one's own language, history, geography". In the course of the present research the researcher has heard this theme constantly reiterated - as is indicated in many of the case studies (3.4, above). It seems to be of crucial importance

to the development of Gaelic-medium social science courses - that these do not constitute merely translations into Gaelic of existent courses, but that they reflect the cultural standpoint of the Gaelic-speaking Scot. Interestingly a Welsh-medium secondary Headteacher indicated (Appendix 3: 5.6.6) that the process of devising Welsh-medium history and geography courses may have affected the slant of their English-medium counterparts.

4.22.19 A proportion of respondents ranked *all* factors A (extremely important) - one teacher from Lewis commented:

4.22.19.1 *"It is impossible to separate any of these. Even political understanding is very important. Ignorance here can lead to belief in simple slogans, especially with regard to national chauvinism of any kind."*

4.22.20 It seems likely that the high profile of "own language", "own culture" and "own history/geography" among this sample derives from their dissatisfaction with the general emphasis throughout the Scottish education system in the past, rather than from narrow "chauvinism": the opinions reproduced earlier in this report indicate a high potential for constructive world-citizenship, frustrated or deflected by the historical displacement of Scottish culture in general, and Gaelic in particular, from the national and international educational map. It seems not unlikely that advances gained in Gaelic education may have some effect on the general philosophy and thrust of Scottish education - given the much more pupil-centred emphasis in Standard Grade courses and assessment generally.

#### 4.23 GENERAL SUMMARY

4.23.1 The results show consistent support for the aims of Gaelic-medium education at every level - pre-school, primary, secondary (and, as demonstrated in the original report, Fraser, 1988, op cit) tertiary. While this conclusion was to be hoped from a sample drawn primarily from the Gaelic-speaking population, it was by no means fore-gone, and the level of the support was above expectation, across all age-ranges and geographical groupings. It would seem that the old misgivings about the disadvantages of bilingualism and the dangers of depriving children of any English-medium opportunities have been dispelled among the large majority of this sample.

4.23.2 There are however certain recurrent concerns - especially in the areas of resource-production and teacher-training.

4.23.3 There is a demand for pre-school Gaelic education to be provided by the Authorities, especially in areas where Gaelic-medium/bilingual primary-schools and units already exist, though not to the exclusion of the activities of CNSA, which involve parents in the child-care and educational process. Official neighbourhood provision may be the only solution for small communities where existent non-Gaelic play-groups inhibit the establishment of Gaelic-medium groups.

4.23.4 The attitude towards non-Gaelic speaking "incomers" is ambivalent - on the one hand there is considerable feeling that excluding them from any areas of communal life because of their language-deficiency is rude and counter-productive; on the other hand the incomer, it is felt, should be

more understanding of the desire of the indigenous population to retain its language and culture and that they should make every effort to learn the language and embrace the indigenous culture. A few respondents expressed the opinion that it is often among incomers that the highest level of interest in things Gaelic is to be found - a point in the favour of Authority-run Gaelic nursery education, which may have equal relevance and appeal to non-Gaelic speaking parents as to Gaelic-speakers.

4.23.5 At primary level the need for resources is seen to be fairly acute, as is that for training/re-training of teachers involved in Gaelic education. There is a strong desire that the Gaelic College be enabled to participate in Gaelic teacher-training if practical. This seems the more significant taking into account the high representation of teachers, who might have been more than averagely cautious about the transference of any elements of professional training to a peripheral, untried context.

4.23.6 The difficulties experienced in establishing Gaelic pre-school play-groups in small communities may also pertain to some extent to provision of Gaelic-medium primary education: while the majority of respondents from the Isles acknowledge that the language may die without Gaelic-medium provision, there are fears that providing separate facilities for those who want such education may prove divisive. Yet "bilingual education for all", as presently provided, is likely to become less and less effective in areas where children decreasingly use Gaelic outwith the school, increasingly enter the school with little or no ability to speak the language. It would seem important that Gaelic-medium education be presented in a positive light to native Gaelic-speaking and non-Gaelic-

speaking parents alike: this sample, with its large teacher-representation, is generally in agreement that children's spoken and written English skills will not be jeopardised by such provision, but that they will almost certainly fail to acquire equivalent Gaelic skills *without* it.

4.23.7 At secondary level there is support for Gaelic-medium education "as soon as courses are prepared" (the qualifying clause is given prominence by many respondents, especially given the need for appropriate Gaelic teacher-training). That Gaelic-speaking pupils should be taught and examined through Gaelic in *all* subjects as soon as possible receives majority support, which represents a highly-significant level of commitment and may indicate a degree of general dissatisfaction at the effective restriction of the Western Isles Bilingual Policy to the primary stage. This may also be one solution to the "problem" of fitting Gaelic into an increasingly prescriptive finite timetable without loss of other opportunities.

4.23.8 Judging by the educational constructs and priorities of the sample, their desire for Gaelic education is by no means to be dismissed as nostalgia for old-fashioned methods and values. There is general support for informal, child-centred practice and for discipline-through-interest, and it is clear that the sample would expect Gaelic-medium educational standards to match their English-medium equivalent.

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#### 4.24 COMMENTS

4.24.1 It would seem appropriate to give the last words of this report to the respondents who answered what is believed to have been the first all-Gaelic questionnaire, and was certainly a long and complex document:

4.24.1 *"Gach deagh shoirbheachadh leibh anns an rannsachadh mionaideach a tha sibh ri deanamh"*

*("I wish you all success in the detailed research you are doing")*

4.24.2 "This is a stupid paper - I gave up half-way through and threw it in the waste-bin"

4.24.3 "Thank you for providing a most interesting and thought-provoking exercise - I have lived here for seventeen years and love Gaelic"

4.24.4 "Rinn mi mo dhìchioll, ach chan'eil mi suas ri sgoilearachd an latha an diugh. As dèidh sin tha fios agam gu dè bu mhaith leam airson maith na Gaidhealtachd. Cha do chreid mi riamh ann a bhith a' cumail ri aon chànan agus dh'fhaodadh sinn duilleag a thoirt as beatha muinntir na Roinn Eòrpa air neo bho muinntir na h-Eiphit agus Israeil. Bruidhnidh a' mhòr-chuid de na daoine sin trì, ceithir neo còig chànan. Ann an Lochlainn tha aca àrd-sgoiltean dùthchail far am faod oileanaich bliadhna a chur seachad 'nuair a dh'fhàgas iad an àrd-

sgoil. Tha iad ag ionnsachadh mòran mun dualchas aca fhèin. Chan'eil deuchainnean idir aca"

*("I did my best, but I'm not up on today's education. On the other hand, I know what I would like for the good of the Gàidhealtachd. I never believed in sticking to one language, and we could take a leaf out of the European book - or of the people of Egypt and Israel. Most of those people speak three, four or five languages. In Scandinavia they have folk high-schools where students can spend a year when they leave secondary school. They learn a lot about their own heritage, without having to sit exams".*

4.24.5 "I did not know about the gaelic class but when i found out i put -----'s name down. Not many people know about the school. There should be more information so that parent's have the chance to chose."

4.24.6 "Care must be taken not to become militant about Gaelic because all Scots share an earlier genetic and cultural inheritance. I suspect that there's a shortage of really scholarly Gaels in this community; the blame for this must lie within the education system and its funding"

4.24.7 "It is a disgrace that there is only one university north of the central belt and it is at present under attack in such departments as Celtic Studies, Russian etc. It seems morally unjustifiable that so much has been taken from the Gaels and remains in cupboards outwith the main Gaelic-speaking area where it is only available to an educated élite. There should be schools of Scottish Studies. It seems

crazy having all this 'culture' in the likes of Edinburgh and Glasgow and Aberdeen when it could be on the very doorstep of a specialised Gaelic 'University' that opened its doors and reached the community from which so much has been taken and so little replaced".

4.24.8 "I might have been less inclined to favour Gaelic had I not recently visited a small Old People's Home. The Superintendent - who does not speak Gaelic - explained that one old lady was much confused and might be difficult. However when I sat and spoke to her in Gaelic she was perfectly lucid, intelligent and of a good standard of education. She begged me to come again"

Ceud taing dhan a h-uile duine airson na ceistean a fhreagairt - tha sinn fada nur comain!

(Thank you all for answering the questionnaire - we are much in your debt)

4.24.9 "Se ur beatha! Tha mo làmh caran goirt a-nis!"

("You're very welcome! My hand's a bit sore now!")

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## 5. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

5.1 Original data presented within the present thesis may be summarised as follows:

5.1.1 Chapter 1: Historical overview Available data have been represented in the light of (a) recent educational developments in urban contexts and (b) demographic trends as regards the present distribution of Gaelic speakers throughout Scotland. Such factors indicate that Gaelic must be viewed within a whole-Scotland context if both the interests of would-be Gaelic-speakers and the perceived human rights of widely-dispersed native Gaelic-speakers are to be properly addressed within the historical country of origin of the (now) minority culture. Restriction of language development and/or maintenance to the residual heartland seems inappropriate to the present situation and unlikely to arrest the decline of Gaelic as a spoken language, though the importance of the heartland, as the only context within which Gaelic may be realistically maintained as the principal medium of communication of whole communities, with diglossia and across a range of customary domains, cannot be overestimated. However this should not be presented in isolation: economic and political factors are of equal relevance and the culture is unlikely to attract the support of young people if subliminally construed as an ingredient of politically impotent, culturally isolated, economically underdeveloped rural life, lacking in opportunities for employment, recreation, communications etc. Documented accounts of the historical

struggle to establish Gaelic as a medium of education in the mainstream education system have been collated and placed in the modern context, within which its cross-curricular employment may be seen as a means of promoting additive bilingualism in non-Gaelic speaking communities in addition to language maintenance within the heartland. This in turn may allay some of the more unfortunate legacies of a history of neglect: on the one hand "siege mentality" or jealous exclusivity, on the other "dog-in-a-manger" alienation or uninformed disinterest - or even antagonism and linguisticism.

**5.1.2 Chapter 2: Linguistic background** Available comparative data relating to language acquisition, language teaching, language planning and bilingualism have been presented as they relate to Scottish Gaelic language and culture. They suggest that present initiatives have (a) educational merit (both for young native speaking Gaels, as mother-tongue teaching, and for L2 learners, as the most effective means of access to general, transferable language skills and cultural enrichment); (b) positive pedagogic affect (in terms of increasing general language and cultural awareness among practitioners and realising the objectives of child-centred methodology); and (c) sociolinguistic and/or psycholinguistic advantages (in terms of the maintenance and development of one of the world's languages and the preferred medium of communication of considerable numbers of people within and furth of Scotland; enhancing the self-regard of native Gaelic speakers, improving the attitudes of non-Gaelic speakers towards an important element of Scottish cultural heritage and its residual bearers, and allaying cultural anomie among the many Scots

who seem to search for a better-defined basis for national and self-identity). Both these chapters indicate time and again the importance (a) of recognising that a language community cannot be viewed as a single homogenous group - variations of attitude must be acknowledged and, though their origins may be traced to unenlightened historical trends, respected: linguistic needs are those which are recognised by the community itself as expressed by its individual members; and (b) the corollary that regenerative exercises must begin within and with the full cooperation and involvement of the community - exterior politically motivated activity may be at best cosmetic, at worst counter-productive. Where these two basic tenets are applied and a real need is seen to emerge, external agencies should be urgently required to offer support which is *appropriate, sufficient and sustained*.

**5.1.3 Chapters 3 and 4: The present situation** Recent developments in language and economic planning within Scotland are represented as a development towards national cooperation and coordination of effort and philosophy, in which national Government has adopted a vital financial pump-priming rôle in support of Regional authorities and voluntary groups. However, salutary national trends towards greater individual choice and influence in educational terms may be outweighed by parallel trends towards (a) privatisation of some of the more public-service orientated agencies, (b) standardisation of national educational objectives and (c) devolvement of educational influence away from supportive local education authorities, unless Government is persuaded properly to safe-guard long-term Gaelic interests through

its statutory legislative mechanism: as indicated in references to Education Acts throughout history (Chapter 1) *bona fide* national legislature may militate against minority interests without specific malice afore-thought. The extent to which Scottish Gaelic is in imminent danger of becoming the irrevocable victim of language shift is illustrated in terms of extra-scholastic language usage among a sample who could be expected to be more, rather than less, punctilious in their efforts to maintain the language within home and community; the practical and psychological difficulties which give rise to this situation are illustrated throughout case-studies; a future, mutually supportive, rôle for teacher, parent and community at large is suggested, in which the problems likely to pertain in each domain are openly acknowledged and addressed within a new, unstressful and *guilt-free* set of parameters. From such cooperation new opportunities for language maintenance and additive measures may emerge. That this is perceived as both desirable and necessary by the target-group (both native speaking and interested non-Gaelic speaking sub-groups) is strikingly demonstrated throughout the Attitude Study (chapter 4), suggesting, paradoxically, that although the language-base is now parlously restricted the conditions may never have been more conducive of future development.

5.2 Areas for future research and development      Much of what has been suggested by and during the period of the present research seems already to have been put in train by the relevant agencies - naturally reflecting the transition of Gaelic-medium education from the experimental period to that of assessment of progress thus far. These are, in themselves, hopeful

trends, indicating on the one hand a vital element of flexibility and adaptability to change and experience in long-term planning terms, and on the other that the educational interests of pupils are paramount. Cyclical development is generally accepted to be essential in Language Planning exercises, with constant *a posteriori* monitoring of short-term effects, both predicted and unpredictable. Thus, specifically, (a) Sabhal Mòr Ostaig undertook a follow-up to the present researcher's Attitude Study, with face-to-face interviewing of Island secondary school pupils (cf Report, MacArthur, A: Sabhal Mòr Ostaig/Glasgow University, 1988); (b) Comhairle nan Eilean has recently appointed a research officer to investigate future bilingual educational development within its area; (c) Highland Regional Council has recently utilised Gaelic-speaking educational psychologists to test general educational progress among its primary Gaelic Unit pupils and is currently beginning investigation into necessary provision at secondary level; (d) Strathclyde Regional Council staff and advisors have been re-defining language policy within Sir John Maxwell Primary GU, working to establish clearer primary-secondary liaison, and the Region is about to appoint a Curriculum Development Officer; (e) Lothian Regional Council plans a Gaelic-medium nursery class for the session beginning August 1990, specifically to outweigh the massively anglophone influence of its catchment and to put Gaelic on a par with English as regards its enlightened general regional pre-school policies; (f) Edinburgh University Celtic Department is presently seeking funding for research into the long-term employment implications of current Gaelic initiatives.

5.3 Montgomery's (1989) report on adult learners of Scots and Irish Gaelic in Glasgow suggests several areas of research and development which would seem of equal relevance to the rest of the country, especially as regards resource production and the presentation of stress-free opportunities for L2 learners to utilise Scottish Gaelic - which at present they appear to learn as a relatively solitary (sometimes over-academic) exercise and hardly ever use for real communicative purposes: this contrasts with the experience of the Irish sample and is a wastage the language can ill afford. The present ground-swell of general interest, taken in tandem with the development of a more communicative approach to language teaching (cf especially SCE Standard-grade and SCOTVEC modular courses) and the perceived need for parents to participate in their children's bilingual experience, urgently requires servicing in terms of readily-available, well-publicised classes, and related staff and resources. Comhairle nan Eilean is at present developing a distance-learning course; Comunn Luchd Ionnsachaidh is about to publish a new adult learners' course; Grampian Television is about to transmit an intermediate stage learners' series as a belated follow-up to BBC's "Can Seo". All these are useful adjuncts. However the most urgent need would seem to be in the publicisation of existent established validated language courses, in the development of further such courses and in the general improvement of methodology: SCOTVEC now includes Gaelic modules among the other Modern Languages (French, German etc) in its catalogue, but there is a desperate shortage of Gaelic teachers (a) trained in modular planning and assessment and (b) able to abandon the more academic approach of past CSE examinations in favour of overtly communicative learning outcomes. There is also an urgent need for collation and creation of communicative teaching materials

of which the major languages have a plethora - from time-tables and menus to newspapers, magazines and television programmes. In short, it would seem essential clearly to define the extent of interest in learning Gaelic at national level - and what is needed to translate this interest into real communicative ability, effective bilingualism, improved census figures for Gaelic, potential Gaelic-medium teachers, broadcasters, writers....

5.3 At Inter-regional level a National Education Conference is planned for May 1990 which will present practitioners, officials, voluntary and community development workers, and researchers with an opportunity to collate, present and debate current issues and areas of concern. Of these teacher training and supply will undoubtedly be a priority, as will the wider implications of all current national education legislative measures. There would seem to be a need for (a) the immediate development and availability of appropriate pre-service training courses for teachers intending to operate through the medium of Gaelic; (b) effective crash-courses for trained teachers unsure of their Gaelic competence; (c) appropriately tailored and situated conversion and/or refresher courses for secondary-trained and/or non-operative primary teachers; (d) specially-designed Gaelic-medium Teaching Qualifications for in-service practitioners - recognised for professional promotion purposes. The geographical situation of existent staff must be taken into consideration in this, if not in the optimal terms of providing training within the Gàidhealtachd, at least in practical terms - increased availability of vacation homes, school experience within Gaelic-speaking areas, grants and travelling expenses for in-service trainees etc. Conversely research into the present geographical situation of Gaelic-speaking primary teachers would seem

useful, including those presently working in England and Wales: the advertising of Gaelic teaching posts by Regional authorities through Scottish media alone may not tap the full available work-force - two young teachers presently employed in Gaelic-medium programmes left posts in England, obtaining information about their present positions by what can only be described as lucky accidents.

5.4 Within individual classrooms it may prove helpful for subjective observation to be reinforced by empirical recording of teacher-pupil interaction, to bring to staff's attention the range and nature of stratagems they employ and, in so-called "bilingual" class-rooms, the extent to which each of the two languages is used - and with which pupils, in which registers, circumstances, curricular areas etc. As Gaelic is customarily the L1 of Gaelic-medium teachers practitioners may be entirely unaware of the ways in which they employ their two languages - and language-restricted pupils who need more consistent linguistic input than their fluent peers may in fact consistently receive less, owing to the teacher's desire to make the child feel comfortable or to be sure that he/she has understood. Code switching in these circumstances deprives the child of the need to understand L2 and such understanding may never fully be acquired.

5.5 Finally.... *"In any community in which there is a serious wide-spread desire for a bilingual or multi-lingual citizenry, priority for early schooling should be given to the language or languages most likely to be neglected"* (Lambert and Tucker, Dublin, 1973: 11)



## **APPENDIX I**

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ARD-OLLAMH NIAL GRANN  
.. M ED., PH.D.



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
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SCOTLAND

TELEPHONE: 041-339 8855

PROFESSOR NIGEL GRANT  
M.A., M.ED., PH.D.

Knowehead Cottage  
2060 Pollokshaws Road  
Glasgow G43 1AT  
9th November 1988

Dear Sir

Under the supervision of Professor Nigel Grant, Department of Education, I am now in what is hopefully the final year of Ph. D research into Gaelic primary education - with special reference to the urban situation. Although I am employed as Education Officer with Comunn na Gàidhlig the Board of CNAG is giving me every encouragement to progress this project as an important element of my work for the organisation.

I am writing therefore to all the Regions currently involved in Gaelic primary education to beg your cooperation in allowing me occasional access where appropriate and convenient, to Gaelic Units in your Region to collect some basic data and observe. I would wish also to contact parents with a view to establishing the linguistic parameters pertaining in each family. I shall be making similar studies in the months ahead in the other Celtic countries, and relating this to available documentation on similar projects world-wide, with a view to collation and comparison of relevant data.

As regards the Gaelic Units I am interested in the following areas:

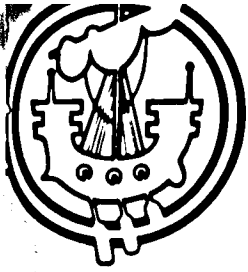
- (a) background numbers, catchment, class size, composition etc
- (b) linguistic background: the extent to which children may be exposed to Gaelic outwith the school, in the family, local or social ambience etc.
- (c) linguistic policy: school policy and stratagems (pedagogic, organisational etc) employed in the class-room vis a vis linguistic background, resources etc
- (d) linguistic situation: extent, circumstance and register of children's use of Gaelic in relation to above factors both as observed in school and as described by teachers and parents.

It should be stressed that all data will be treated as confidential, and referred to only in terms of complete anonymity; also that this element of the research is intended to provide general descriptive/informational material, and is in no way concerned with assessment, though it would be hoped that such material will be of use when proper assessment programmes are instigated by the authorities concerned.

If you endorse this request in principle I shall be indebted for your advice and practical assistance in making contact with schools and parents.

Yours faithfully

*Anne Fraser*



-434-  
**COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN**

**Western Isles Islands Council**

**Sandwick Road Stornoway PA87 2BW**

**Rathad Shanndabhaig  
Steornabhagh PA87 2BW**

Mrs Anne Fraser  
C/O Department of Education  
The University  
GLASGOW  
G12 8QQ

telephone 0851 - 3773 Ext 432  
fax 0851 - 5349  
writer : Lachlan F Dick  
our reference : LFD/NM  
your reference :  
date : 15 November 1988

Dear Mrs Fraser

**ACCESS TO GAELIC UNITS**

I refer to your letter of 9 November 1988 seeking our agreement to your contacting our Gaelic Units as part of your research work.

We have no objections to this and I suggest that the way forward would be for you to contact Miss Christina Mackenzie, Primary Adviser, Curriculum Development Unit, Gibson Centre, Ripley Place, Stornoway, to progress the matter further.

Please accept our good wishes in your research work.

Yours sincerely

  
Lachlan F Dick  
Depute Director of Education

Copy to: Christina Mackenzie - for info

# Roinn na Gaidhealtachd Highland



Department of Education  
Director  
C. E. Stewart B.Sc., Ph.D., A.R.C.S.T.,  
C.Chem., M.R.S.C.

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Regional Buildings  
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IV3 5NX

Telephone 0463 234121  
Telex 75313  
Facsimile 0463 223201

Please ask for Mr Findlay

Our ref. JGF/AJR

Extension No 485

Your ref

Date 25 November 1988

Mrs Anne Fraser  
Knowehead Cottage  
2060 Pollokshaws Road  
GLASGOW

Dear Anne

Thank you for your letter of 9 November.

I am happy to approve your request for access to Gaelic medium units in the region. Can I suggest that you contact Donald John MacLeod, our Gaelic Education Development Officer, at 13 Ardross Street, Inverness, Tel 225449. I have no doubt he will be pleased to give you advice on the best way of making contact with schools and parents.

Yours sincerely

J G Findlay  
Depute Director of Education

cc Dr D J MacLeod  
Mr N Murray

Department of Education  
Strathclyde House  
20 India Street  
Glasgow G2 4PF

-436-



DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION  
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Our Ref DM/JW

Your Ref

If phoning or  
calling ask for

Date 15 November 19878

Dear Mrs Fraser

#### RESEARCH ON GAELIC EDUCATION

Thank you for your letter of 9 November 1988 regarding your research thesis. I am happy to agree in principle to your having access to the authority's Gaelic bilingual units for the purposes indicated.

It would be helpful if you would get in touch with the divisional officer in the first instance prior to initial contact with a unit in order that staff might be alerted to the approach and be in a position to give whatever co-operation might be possible.

I have accordingly copied our exchange of correspondence to the divisional education officers in Dunbarton and Glasgow divisions. I have also asked that they have consideration given to the possibility of identifying any aspects of research in this area which might be of particular value.

I trust that you will find the foregoing helpful. Please accept my best wishes for the success of your studies.

Yours sincerely

DAVID A MONTGOMERY  
Assistant Director of Education

Glasgow Division  
129 Bath Street  
Glasgow G2 2SY

-457-



Divisional Education Officer  
Philip F Drake MA MEd MSc

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Date 22 November 1988

Mrs A Fraser  
Department of Education  
The University  
GLASGOW G12 8QQ

Dear Mrs Fraser

RESEARCH ON GAELIC EDUCATION

I have been informed by Mr D A Montgomery, Assistant Director of Education, that you would like access to the Gaelic Unit located in Sir John Maxwell Primary School to conduct research on behalf of your Ph D thesis.

There is certainly no objection to you having access to the Gaelic Unit for this purpose. I have informed Mrs Houston, Head Teacher, that you will be in touch to make appropriate arrangements to conduct this research.

I should like to wish you every success with your thesis.

Yours sincerely

I McEWAN  
Education Officer

(Name of School) \_\_\_\_\_

CHILDREN IN GAELIC UNITS

Gaelic-medium and Bilingual Education is developing fast. It is important for the future of Gaelic education that an overall picture is available of how much Gaelic the children attending Gaelic Units are hearing and using outside the school. All parents are therefore respectfully asked to complete the following brief questionnaire and return to the school by:

The results of the questionnaire will be used to compare different situations in different parts of Scotland, especially to compare those in the cities with those in rural Highland/Island communities. The findings will be analysed as part of a Ph.D thesis I am currently writing on "Gaelic " and may then be published and/or made available to the Education Authorities to assist in future planning. No child or family will be personally identified at any stage now or in the future.

The questions are asked only with a view to discovering the children's Gaelic experience outside the school, and I apologise if some of them sound a bit like poll-tax forms! The head-teacher at your school has seen the questionnaire and may be approached if you have particular doubts about any of the questions or how to answer them.

(Education Officer, Comann na Gàidhlig)

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Please complete the following page giving details of the child or children who is or are currently attending a Gaelic Unit. Details of other children in the family need not be included at this stage in the questionnaire.

1.1 Eldest Child in family who attends Gaelic Unit:-

Class: P\_\_\_\_\_ Sex: M / F Age: \_\_\_\_\_yrs\_\_\_\_\_mths

1.2 Did this child attend pre-school Gaelic play-group? Y / N

1.3 If "yes", for how long? \_\_\_\_\_ times a week, for \_\_\_\_\_ months.

1.4 Did this child attend English play-group or nursery? Y / N

1.5 If "yes", for how long? \_\_\_\_\_ times a week, for \_\_\_\_\_ months.

-----

2.1 Second Child in family who attends Gaelic Unit:-

Class: P\_\_\_\_\_ Sex: M / F Age: \_\_\_\_\_yrs\_\_\_\_\_mths

2.2 Did this child attend pre-school Gaelic play-group? Y / N

2.3 If "yes", for how long? \_\_\_\_\_ times a week, for \_\_\_\_\_ months.

2.4 Did this child attend English play-group or nursery? Y / N

2.5 If "yes", for how long? \_\_\_\_\_ times a week, for \_\_\_\_\_ months.

-----

3.1 Third Child in family who attends Gaelic Unit:-

Class: P\_\_\_\_\_ Sex: M / F Age: \_\_\_\_\_yrs\_\_\_\_\_mths

3.2 Did this child attend pre-school Gaelic play-group? Y / N

3.3 If "yes", for how long? \_\_\_\_\_ times a week, for \_\_\_\_\_ months.

3.4 Did this child attend English play-group or nursery? Y / N

3.5 If "yes", for how long? \_\_\_\_\_ times a week, for \_\_\_\_\_ months.



4. Please answer this section by putting a mark in the box beside whichever of the following apply in your family:-

4.1 Children's mother's ability to speak Gaelic:

Fluent ☐ Can speak some ☐ Is learning ☐ None ☐

4.2 Children's father's ability to speak Gaelic:

Fluent ☐ Can speak some ☐ Is learning ☐ None ☐

4.3 Children's father has Gaelic background ☐

4.5 Children's mother has Gaelic background ☐

4.6 Children's mother's employment:-

Works full-time ☐ part-time ☐ Full-time H/Wife ☐

---

5. Answer this section by filling in the appropriate numbers at each question. *N.B. All children, whether attending Gaelic Primary Unit or not, should be included here:-*

5.1 How many people altogether are living in the family home?

Adults: \_\_\_\_\_

Children: \_\_\_\_\_ Ages: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

5.2 How many fluent Gaelic speakers are living in the home?

Adults: \_\_\_\_\_

Children: \_\_\_\_\_ Ages: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

5.3 How many people able to read and write Gaelic are living in the home?

Adults: \_\_\_\_\_

Children: \_\_\_\_\_ Ages: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

6. Answer this section by putting a mark in the box beside whichever of the following apply in your family:-

6.1 Adults speak Gaelic together:

all the time ☐ often ☐ sometimes ☐ never ☐

6.2 Mother speaks Gaelic to children:

all the time ☐ often ☐ sometimes ☐ never ☐

6.3 Other adult (or adults) speak Gaelic to children:

all the time ☐ often ☐ sometimes ☐ never ☐

6.4 Children reply in Gaelic to adults:

all the time ☐ often ☐ sometimes ☐ never ☐

6.5 Children address adults in Gaelic:

all the time ☐ often ☐ sometimes ☐ never ☐

6.6 Children speak to each other in Gaelic:

all the time ☐ often ☐ sometimes ☐ never ☐

6.7 Available Gaelic radio programmes are listened to by adults:

all the time ☐ often ☐ sometimes ☐ never ☐

6.8 Gaelic radio programmes are listened to by children:

all the time ☐ often ☐ sometimes ☐ never ☐

6.9 Available Gaelic TV programmes are watched by adults:

all the time ☐ often ☐ sometimes ☐ never ☐

6.10 Gaelic TV programmes are watched by children:

all the time ☐ often ☐ sometimes ☐ never ☐

6.11 How many available Gaelic children's books are in the home?

all/most ☐ some ☐ none ☐

6.12 Other situations where children hear Gaelic outside school:-

Visiting relatives ☐ Among neighbours ☐ At shops ☐

In church ☐ On holiday ☐ Playing with other children ☐

Among parents' friends ☐ At ceilidhs ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

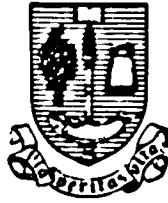
## **APPENDIX 2**

OILTHIGH GHLASCHU  
UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

OINN AN FHOGHLAIM  
N T-OILTHIGH  
LASCHU G12 8QQ  
LBA

DN: 041-339 8855

N T-ARD-OLLAMH NIALl GRANND  
A., M.ED., PH.D.



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
THE UNIVERSITY  
GLASGOW G12 8QQ  
SCOTLAND

TELEPHONE: 041-339 8855

PROFESSOR NIGEL GRANT  
M.A., M.ED., PH.D.

October 1987

A charaid/bhan-charaid

This Department, in conjunction with the Gaelic College in Skye (Sabhal Mòr Ostaig) is conducting research into popular attitudes towards Gaelic education. We would be most grateful if you would complete the enclosed Questionnaire and return it, at your earliest convenience, in the pre-paid envelope provided.

We realise it is a lengthy document, but this seemed necessary in order to achieve a fair and comprehensive picture of what is both a complex and an important subject. However you will find that there is little or no writing necessary - merely the selection from a series of multiple choices.

If you find yourself unwilling or unable to answer the questionnaire it would be of great assistance if you would either pass it on to someone who would care to be involved or post back the blank document, giving an indication of whether you would like us to forward an English version instead. We do hope, however, that the large majority of people will complete the questions in Gaelic.

It would also be greatly helpful if, at the time of returning your questionnaire, completed or otherwise, you would provide the names and addresses of any other people wishing to record their views. The lower age-range is Secondary 4, but otherwise there are no restrictions of age, occupation, geographical location etc. As opinions may well vary significantly within families, there need be no restriction on the number of members in a household who complete the questionnaire.

The completed document may be returned entirely anonymously, and the general personal details asked for are purely for purposes of analysis. Naturally the utmost confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

Is mise le spèis

*Anne Fraser*

ANNE FRASER, M.A., P.G.C.E., (Research student)

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I ~~would~~/would not like to be forwarded the English version of the Questionnaire (~~delete as appropriate~~).

N.B. The reverse of this page may be used for names and addresses of others willing to participate, with, if possible, an indication of Gaelic or English.

# **CEISTEACHAN**

## **GAIDHLIG ann am FOGHLAM**

**Roinn an Fhoghlaim  
An t-Ollthigh  
Glaschu**

**comhla ri**

**Sabhal Mòr Ois  
(a' Chòlaisde Gàidhlig**

A. FREAGAIR NA THOGRAS TU: -

Ainm: \_\_\_\_\_

Seòladh: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

B. GU BHITH AIR AN FREAGAIRT LEIS A H-UILLE DUINE: -

Baile no Sgìre (mur do sgrìobh thu do sheòladh): \_\_\_\_\_

Càit an do rugadh tu?: \_\_\_\_\_

Dè'n aois a tha thu? (mu thimcheall): \_\_\_\_\_

Do chiad chànan: \_\_\_\_\_

Dreuchd: \_\_\_\_\_

Dreuchd mu dheireadh (ma tha thu air a leigeil dhiot): \_\_\_\_\_

Ire san Àrd-sgoil (mas e sgoilear a tha annad): \_\_\_\_\_

Dè tha thu an dùil a dhèanamh an uair a dh'fhàgas tu'n sgoil? (mas e sgoilear a tha annad): \_\_\_\_\_

Ire san oilthigh/sa cholaside (mas e oileanach a tha annad): \_\_\_\_\_

Dè seòrsa cùrsa a tha thu ris an dràsda: (san oilthigh/sa cholaside): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Dè seòrsa obair a tha thu an dùil fhaighinn? (an-uair a dh'fhàgas tu'n oilthigh/cholaisde): \_\_\_\_\_

Dè na comainn no rudan eile ceangailte ri Gàidhlig sa bheil thu air a bhith an sàs?: \_\_\_\_\_

-1-

Air na duilleagan a leanas chi thu feadhainn de na beachdan a dh'fhaodadh a bhith aig deifir dhaoine - beachdan mu dheidhinn foghlaim, agus Gàidhlig, agus foghlaim Ghàidhlig.

Leugh gach beachd, fear na seach: a bheil thu a' dol leis no na aghaidh, agus dè cho làidir 'sa tha thu a' dol leis neo na aghaidh?

Cuir do bharail fhèin an cèill le cearcall a tharraing timcheall air tè dhe na còig litrichean (A B C D E) ri taobh gach earrainn:-

A: rachainn leis a' bheachd seo gu math làidir

B: rachainn leis a' bheachd seo

C: chan eil faireachdainn làidir sam bith agam mun bheachd seo

D: cha rachainn leis a' bheachd seo

E: rachainn an aghaidh a' bheachd seo gu math làidir

---

N.B. Chan fheum thu mi sam bith ach sin a dhèanamh, ach ma tha thu airson facal a chur ris tha beàrn aig deireadh gach earrainn far am faod thu sin a dhèanamh.

BHIODH E NA B'FHEARR NAM SGRIOBHADH TU ANW AN GAIDHLIG, ACH DHEANADH BEURLA AN GNOTHACH.

1. CÀNAN AGUS CULTAR - SAN PHARSAINGEACHD

i. 'S e rud glè fheumail a tha ann an dàchànanas (an comas barrachd is aon chànan a bhruidhinn) ge b' e cò na cànanan.

A B C D E

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ii. San latha an-diugh, leis cho làidir 's a tha Bheurla air feadh an t-saoghail, cha d'fhiach e cànan beag mar Ghàidhlig a bhruidhinn.

A B C D E

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iii. Ann an dùthaich ioma-chultarach mar Alba bu chòir dhan Riaghaltas taic a thoirt dhan a h-uile cultar agus cànan.

A B C D E

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iv. Bithidh deifir chànanan agus chleachdaidhean a' toirt air daoine a dhol a-mach air a chèile.

A B C D E

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v. Bithidh cion tuigse air cànanan agus cultaran eile a' toirt air daoine a dhol a-mach air a chèile.

A B C D E

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vi. Cha tuig duine sam bith cultaran eile gun a bhith a' tuigsinn a chultar fhèin.

A B C D E

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-3-

vii. Cha bu chòir dhan Riaghaltas brosnachadh Àraid a thoirt do Ghàidhlig seach cànan coimhearsnachd sam bith eile ann an Alba - mar Urdu, Sìneis, Eadailteis is mar sin air adhart.

A B C D E

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viii. Bu chòir dhan Riaghaltas brosnachadh Àraid a thoirt do Ghàidhlig mar chànan dùthchasach na h-Alba.

A B C D E

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ix. Bu chòir dhan Riaghaltas an t-aon bhrosnachadh a thoirt do chultar dùthchasach nan Gall Albannach (Lowland Scots) 's a bheir iad do chultar nan Gàidheal ann an Alba.

A B C D E

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x. Bu chòir dhan Riaghaltas Gàidhlig ainmeachadh mar chànan oifigeach Breatannach.

A B C D E

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xi. Chan fhàs na Gàidheil misneachail agus earbsach annta fhèin gus am bith misneachd agus earbsa aca nan cànan agus nan cultar fhèin.

A B C D E

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xii. Dh'fhàsadh na Gàidheil na bu mhisneachaile agus na b'adhartaiche nan cuireadh iad cùl ri cànan agus cultar a bhuineas do na linntean a dh'fhalbh.

A B C D E

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-4-

xiii. Cha tèid aig sluagh sam bith air duilgheadasan an latha an-diugh a rèiteachadh gun eòlas agus tuigse air an eachdraidh agus an cultar fhèin.

A B C D E

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xiv. 'S e saoghal bochd a bhios ann ma dh'fhàsas a h-uile dùthaich agus sluagh coltach ri chèile nan cultar, nan cànan is nan cleachdaidhean tro neart telebhisein is nam meadhannan eile.

A B C D E

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xv. Cha tig sith air an t-saoghal gus am fàs a h-uile sluagh nas fhaisge air a chèile nan cultar, nan cànan is nan cleachdaidhean.

A B C D E

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xvi. Cha tig sith air an t-saoghal gus an seasar còraichean gach duine a chultar agus a chànan agus a chleachdaidhean fhèin a chumail suas.

A B C D E

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xvii. Bhiodh e na bu chiallaiche airgead a chosg air cultar priseil nan Gàidheal fhoillseachadh air feadh an t-saoghail na air Gàidhlig ath-bheòthachadh mar chànan làitheil 's na coimhearsnachdan.

A B C D E

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xviii. Bho am gu am thèid seann chànanan beaga à bith cò-dhiubh no cò-dheth: leis cho lag 's a tha Ghàidhlig air fàs ann an Alba, bhiodh e na b'fheàrr leigeil leatha bàsachadh, mar Chòrnais no Gàidhlig Mhanainn.

A B C D E

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2. GAIDHLIG ANN AM FOGHLAM - CLANN FO AOIS SGOILE

i. 'S e rud math a th'ann clann a chur gu cròileagan no sgoil-àraich mus tèid iad dhan bhun-sgoil.

A B C D E

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ii. 'S e an dachaigh, agus glùn am màthar, an t-àrach as fheàrr a th'ann do chlann òg.

A B C D E

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iii. Bu chòir clann a bhios an dùil a dhol gu bun-sgoil no aonad Ghàidhlig an cànan sin a bhruidhinn anns a' chròileagan no anns an sgoil-àraich dhan tèid iad.

A B C D E

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iv. Ma tha clann an dùil a dhol gu bun-sgoil Bheurla cha d'fhiach e Gàidhlig a bhruidhinn anns a' chròileagan no anns an sgoil-àraich dhan tèid iad.

A B C D E

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v. Bu chòir clann a dachaighean Gàidhlig a bhith a' cluich tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig còmhla ri clann eile gus am fàs iad measail air cànan am pàrantan.

A B C D E

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vi. Bu chòir dha na Gàidheil cròileagana Ghàidhlig a ruith dhaibh pèin gu saor-thoileach ma tha iad gan iarraidh.

A B C D E

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vii. Tha na h-ùghdarrasan a' ruith sgoiltean-àraich Bheurla gus clann ullachadh airson a dhol dhan bhun-sgoil: bu chòir dhaibh, san aon dòigh, sgoiltean-àraich Gàidhlig a ruith ann an àiteachan far a bheil aonad neo bun-sgoil Gàidhlig stèidhichte aca mar-tha .

A B C D E

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viii. Ma tha cròileagan Gàidhlig gu bhith èifeachdach, feumar Gàidhlig a bhruidhinn fad na h-ùine (ach 's docha ann an èiginn) fiù 's an-uair a bhios daoine gun fhacal Gàidhlig an-làthair .

A B C D E

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ix. Bu chòir pàrantan a thig a choimhearsnachdan Gàidhealach bhon taobh-a-muigh a h-uile taic a thoirt do Ghàidhlig mar chànan dùthchasach an àite.

A B C D E

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x. 'S e daoine a thig bhon taobh-a-muigh, agus a' dh'fheuchas ri rudan mar chròileagain eagrachadh nan dòigh fhèin, aon de na cnapan-starra as motha a th'ann do Ghàidhlig anns na coimhearsnachdan Gàidhealach.

A B C D E

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xi. 'S e laigse mhuinntir na Gàidhealtachd, a thionndaidheas gu Beurla an-uair a bhios aon duine gun Ghàidhlig an-làthair, cnap-starra nas motha buileach.

A B C D E

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xii. Cuiridh leige nan Gàidheal a bhruidhneas Beurla rin cuid chloinne as dhan chànan, a dh'aindheoin cia-mheud cròileagan Gàidhlig a bhios ann.

A B C D E

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3. GAIDHLIG ANNS A' BHUN-SGOIL

i. Tha e math gu leòr beagan Gàidhlig a theagasg mar chuspair sa bhun-sgoil, ach leis cho cudromach 's a tha Bheurla chan eil ann ach faoineas a bhith a' teagasg clann tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig.

A B C D E

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ii. Leis cho gann 's a tha airgead anns na bun-sgoiltean 's e call sgriosail a th'ann a bhith ga chosg air foghlam Gàidhlig.

A B C D E

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iii. Leis cho gann 's a tha leabhraichean agus stuth-teagaisg Gàidhlig cumaidh e clann air ais a bhith gan teagasg tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig.

A B C D E

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iv. Leis cho làidir sa tha Bheurla, thèid Gàidhlig a bith a dh'aithghearr mura faigh clann foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig, cò-dhiubh sa bhun-sgoil.

A B C D E

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v. As dèidh dearmad nan linntean a dh'fhalbh tha 'n t-àm aig na h-ùghdarrasan a-nis a h-uile cothrom a thoirt do dh'fhoghlam Gàidhlig, ge bith dè chosgas e.

A B C D E

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vi. Mar is lionmhora a dh'fhàsas bun-sgoiltean Gàidhlig 's ann as fhasa a dh'fhàsas e leabhraichean is stuth-teagaisg fhoillseachadh.

A B C D E

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vii. Bhiodh e na b'fheàrr cuid den chloinn a theagasg tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig, ann an aonad neo bun-sgoil air-leth, na beagan Gàidhlig a thoirt dhan a h-uile pàisid sa bhun-sgoil a dheòin no dh'aindheòin.

A B C D E

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viii. Dhèanadh aonadan neo bun-sgoiltean air-leth sgaradh a-measg theaghlaichean agus choimhearsnachdan.

A B C D E

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ix. Cha rachadh aig clann ionnsachadh tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig fad na h-ùine, air sàilleabh 's nach eil faclan aig daoine airson cuid de na cuspairean a gheibh clann sa bhun-sgoil.

A B C D E

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x. An àite a ràdh nach eil e furasda cuid a chuspairean a theagasg tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig, bu chòir dha na h-ùghdarrasan trèanadh freagarrach a thoirt do thidsearan a tha gu bhith an-sàs ann am foghlam Gàidhlig.

A B C D E

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xi. Ma chleachdas daoine Gàidhlig airson chuspairean nach buin do sheòl-beatha agus feallsanachd nan Gàidheal caillidh i a brìgh agus cha bhí luach innte mar chànan an uair sin.

A B C D E

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xii. Cha d'fhiach e Gàidhlig a chumail beò mar chànan traidiseanta mura faodar a cleachdadh anns a h-uile suidheachadh a dh'èireas anns an fhicheadamh linn.

A B C D E

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4. GAIDHLIG ANNS AM ÀRD-SGOIL

i. Tha e math gu leòr Gàidhlig a bhruidhinn ri clann sa bhun-sgoil, ach an-uair a thig iad gu aois dusan bliadhna tha 'n t-àm aca an cùl a chur ri saoghal cumhang na dachaigh.

A B C D E

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ii. Bu chòir òigridh fhileanta, a tha air foghlam Gàidhlig fhaighinn sa bhun-sgoil, a h-uile cuspair ionnsachadh tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig ma thogras iad, cho luath 's a bhios cùrsaichean deiseil dhaibh.

A B C D E

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iii. Tha e math gu leòr Gàidhlig a theagasg mar chuspair san àrd-sgoil, ach chumadh e òigridh air ais anns na deuchainnean nan ionnsaicheadh iad cuspairean eile tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig.

A B C D E

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iv. An àite a ràdh gun cum e òigridh air ais a bhith ag ionnsachadh tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig san àrd-sgoil, bu chòir do na h-ùghdarrasan trèanadh freagarrach a thoirt do na tidsearan, agus deuchainnean ullachadh anns a' chànan, mar a rinn iad sa Chuimrigh.

A B C D E

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v. Cha d'fhiach e coimeas a dhèanamh eadar Gàidhlig agus Cuimris - tha'n suidheachadh poileataiceach gu math eadar-dhealaichte ann an Alba, agus cha ghabh e atharrachadh.

A B C D E

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vi. Bu chòir do na Gàidheil oidhirp a dhéanamh gus an suidheachadh phoileataiceach atharrachadh, agus an cànan a chleachdadh mar shuaicheantas, mar a rinn na Cuimrich.

A B C D E

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vii. Bha Gàidhlig air a tairginn mar chuspair san àrd-sgoil fad iomadh bliadhna, ach tha na h-àireamhan a thagh i an Àite Frangais a' dearbhadh nach eil ùidh gu leòr ann airson foghlam Gàidhlig a leasachadh.

A B C D E

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viii. Chan e cion ùidh ann an Gàidhlig a chum air ais i mar chuspair san àrd-sgoil ach inbhe ìseal a' chàin san fharsaingeachd (seach cànan mòr "chudtromach" mar Fhrangais).

A B C D E

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ix. Ann an saoghal far a bheil Beurla aig a h-uile duine cò-dhiubh, tha òigridh a dh'ionnsaicheas tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig a' faighinn barrachd cothrom na iad an a dh'ionnsaicheas na cuspairean ceudna tro Bheurla.

A B C D E

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x. Tha feumannan eadar-dhealaichte aig òigridh a-rèir 's càit a bheil iad a' fuireach agus bu chòir foghlam an t-eadar-dhealachadh sin aithneachadh.

A B C D E

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xi. Tha an Riaghaltas ag ràdh gum bu chòir òigridh air feadh na dùthcha an dearbh seòrsa foghlaim fhaighinn, ach chan e feumannan na h-òigridh a tha air cùl a' bheachd sin, ach sàbhaladh airgid.

A B C D E

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5. GAIDHLIG ANN AN COLAISDE NO OILTHIGH

i. Bu chòir do dh'oileanach sam bith ann an dùthaich sam bith foghlam fhaighinn tro mheadhan a chànain fhéin na thogras e.

A B C D E

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ii. Chan eil na cúrsaichean a gheibh òigridh san Àrd-sgoil an dràsda gan ullachadh airson foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig sa Chòlaisde.

A B C D E

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iii. Chan fhàs Gàidheil òga earbsach anna fhéin mura dearbhar gu bheil Gàidhlig a cheart cho feumail ri cànan sam bith eile airson a h-uile cuspair aig a h-uile h-ìre.

A B C D E

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iv. Leis cho gann 's a tha obair san latha an-diugh 's e facineas a th'ann trèanadh a ghabhail ann an colaisde bheag iomallach (mar Sabhal Mòr Ostaig) tro mheadhan cànan bhig mar Ghàidhlig.

A B C D E

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v. Tha na tha falbh de dh'òigridh gu oilthighean agus colaisdean a' bhaile-mhòir, a' chuid mhòr dhiubh gun tilleadh, a' lagachadh na Gàidhealtachd.

A B C D E

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vi. Ma thèid Gàidheil gu colaisde sa Ghàidhealtachd an àite saoghal farsaing a' bhaile-mhòir, chan fhaigh iad ach sealladh cumhang nach cuidich le leasachadh na Gàidhealtachd.

A B C D E

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vii. Bhiodh e na bu fhreagarraiche eachdraidh, litreachas agus ceòl nan Gaidheal a theagasg ann an colaisde Ghàidhlig, agus foghlam nas fharsainghe fhàgail aig na colaisdean mòra stèidhichte.

A B C D E

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viii. Tha na h-oilthighean a' déanamh gu leòr mar-thà airson litreachas, eachdraidh agus beul-aithris Ghàidhlig a theagasg is a rannsachadh - bu chòir dhan Cholaisde Ghàidhlig cuspairean nas fheumaile a thairgsinn.

A B C D E

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ix. Cha ghabh duilgheadasan sònraichte na Gàidhealtachd fhuasgladh gun tuigse agus sgilean sònraichte a bhith air an teagasg do mhuinntir an àite, le muinntir an àite, anns an àite.

A B C D E

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x. Cha ghabh duilgheadasan sònraichte na Gàidhealtachd fhuasgladh gun tuigse agus sgilean sònraichte a bhith air an teagasg do mhuinntir an àite, le muinntir an àite, anns an àite, tro chànan dùthchasach an àite.

A B C D E

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xi. 'S e an dòigh as fheàrr air duilgheadasan na Gàidhealtachd fhuasgladh cothrom a thoirt do dh'oileanaich sgilean freagarrach ionnsachadh a-measg daoine adhartach a' bhaile-mhòir.

A B C D E

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xii. Bu chòir dhan Cholaisde Ghàidhlig trèanadh sònraichte a thoirt dhan luchd-teagasg a tha an-sàs ann am foghlam Gàidhlig.

A B C D E

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xiii. Anns na h-oilthighean tha Gàidhlig air a teagasg is air a rannsachadh mar sheann chànan marbh, chan ann mar chànan beò an fhicheadamh linn.

A B C D E

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xiv. Bu chòir Sabhal Mòr Ostaig Gàidhlig a bhrosnachadh mar chànan beò le litreachas, ceòl is dràma an latha-an-diugh a theagasg, agus sgrìobhadh, cluich is sgilean ùra a leasachadh.

A B C D E

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xv. Chan eil na h-oilthighean a' dèanamh gu leòr piobrachaidh, ann an dòigh fhollaiseach agus phoileataiceach, as-leth na Gàidhlig.

A B C D E

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xvi. Bu chòir dhan Chòlaisde Ghàidhlig a bhith air thoiseach ann a bhith a' piobrachadh, ann an dòigh fhollaiseach agus phoileataiceach, as leth na Gàidhlig.

A B C D E

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xvii. Bu chòir Sabhal Mòr Ostaig Gàidhlig a bhrosnachadh le bhith teagasg sgilean (mar phoileataics agus craobh-sgaoileadh) a chuireas òigridh gu feum as leth a' chànain san làrna-mhàireach.

A B C D E

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xviii. Cha bu chòir dhan Chòlaisde Ghàidhlig ainm fhaighinn mar àite ro phoileataiceach, air eagal 's gun caill i taic oifigeil.

A B C D E

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xix. Chaidh a' Cholaisde Ghàidhlig stèidheachadh anns an àite cheàrr - tha an t-Eilean Sgitheanach cus ro Ghailda.

A B C D E

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xx. Tha an t-Eilean Sgitheanach math gu leòr airson colaisde Ghàidhlig, ach tha Slèibhte cus ro iomallach.

A B C D E

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xxi. Tha an t-Eilean Sgitheanach glè fhreagarrach airson colaisde Ghàidhlig, bhon is e àite làn eachdraidh, ainmeil air feadh an t-saoghail a th'ann.

A B C D E

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xxii. Tha an t-Eilean Sgitheanach glè fhreagarrach airson Colaisde Ghàidhlig, bhon is e àite car fosgailte a thaobh creideamh a tha ann, seach eileanan eile an Innse Gall.

A B C D E

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xxiii. 'S e àite gu math freagarrach a th'anns an Eilean Sgitheanach bhon is ann an àiteachan far a bheil a' Ghàidhlig air a dhol sìos gu math luath a bhios daoine a' dèanamh an oidhirp as motha airson a h-ath-bheòthachadh.

A B C D E

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xxiv. An àite gearan mun aon cholaisde Ghàidhlig a tha aca, bu chòir do na Gàidheil feuchainn ri colaisdean Gàidhlig eile a stèidheachadh, airson àiteachan eile a fhrithéaladh agus caochladh chuspairean a theagasg.

A B C D E

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-15-

Air an ath dhuilleig chì thu clàr ainmean - feadhainn de na h-ùghdarrasan, agus buidhnean, agus companaidhean a bhios a' gabhail gnothaich ri Gàidhlig a-measg a h-uile cail eile a tha aca ri dhèanamh.

Tha mi airson dà rud fhaighinn a-mach:

a) Dè cho cudromach 's a tha gach fear dhiubh, nad bheachd-sa, airson cor na Gàidhlig a leasachadh no a lagachadh?

AGUS

b) A bheil iad a' dèanamh gu leòr an-dràsda, a rèir an comais, airson Gàidhlig a bhrosnachadh, no am bu chòir dhaibh tuilleadh a dhèanamh?

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a) Tarraing cearcall timcheall air tè de na litrichean (A B C D E) ri taobh gach ainm:-

A: uamhasach fhèin cudromach

B: cudromach

C: dh'fhaodadh iad a bhith cudromach

D: chan eil uamhasach cudromach

E: chan eil cudromach idir

AGUS

b) Cuir comharra ann am fear de na colbhan ri taobh gach ainm:-

THA: ~~ma~~ tha thu den bheachd gu bheil iad a' dèanamh  
gu leòr airson Gàidhlig a bhrosnachadh ~~mar~~-tha,

NO

CHAN EIL: ~~ma~~ tha thu den bheachd nach eil.

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F.B. Ma tha feadhainn ann nach aithne dhut cò th'annta, no gu dè bhios iad ris, fàg bàn na litrichean agus na colbhan.

**6. NA H-UGHDARRASAN**

**THA : CHAN EIL**

An Riaghaltas Naiseanta	A	B	C	D	E	:
An Partaidh Laborach	A	B	C	D	E	:
An Partaidh Liberal	A	B	C	D	E	:
An SDP	A	B	C	D	E	:
Partaidh Naiseanta na h-Alba (SNP)	A	B	C	D	E	:
Roinn Foghlam na h-Alba (Scottish Education Dept)	A	B	C	D	E	:
Comhairle nan Ealan (The Arts Council)	A	B	C	D	E	:
Bòrd Leasachaidh na Gàidhealtachd (HIDB)	A	B	C	D	E	:
Comhairle nan Eilean	A	B	C	D	E	:
Roinn na Gàidhealtachd	A	B	C	D	E	:
Roinn Srath Chluaidh	A	B	C	D	E	:
Na Comhairlean Roinneil eile ann an Alba	A	B	C	D	E	:
Na Comhairlean Sgìreil air a' Ghàidhealtachd	A	B	C	D	E	:
Na h-eaglaisean	A	B	C	D	E	:
B.B.C Scotland	A	B	C	D	E	:
Grampian T.V	A	B	C	D	E	:
Scottish Television	A	B	C	D	E	:
Vest Highland Free Press	A	B	C	D	E	:
Stornoway Gazette	A	B	C	D	E	:
Oban Times	A	B	C	D	E	:
Paipèaran-naidheachd naiseanta ann an Alba	A	B	C	D	E	:

Air an ath dhuilleig chì thu clàr ainmean - feadhainn de na buidhnean, no companaidhean, a bhios a' gabhail gnothaich ri Gàidhlig fad na h-ùine.

Tha mi airson dà rud fhaighinn a-mach:

a) Dè cho feumail, nad bheachd fhèin, 's a tha obair gach buidhne, no companaidh, airson Gàidhlig a bhrosnachadh?

AGUS

b) cò na buidhnean, no companaidhean, a bu chòir tuilleadh taic-airgid fhaighinn airson an obair a leudachadh?

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a) Tarraing cearcall timcheall air tè de na litrichean (A B C D E) ri taobh gach ainm a shealltainn dè cho feumail 's a tha an obair nad bheachd:-

A: uamhasach fhèin feumail

B: feumail

C: dh'fhaodadh iad a bhith feumail

D: chan eil uamhasach feumail

E: chan eil gu feum sam bith

AGUS

b) cuir comharra ann am fear de na colbhan ri taobh gach ainm:

THA: ma tha thu a' smaoineachadh gum bu chòir dhaibh  
tuilleadh airgid fhaighinn airson an obair a  
leudachadh

NO

CHAN EIL: ma tha thu a' smaoineachadh nach bu chòir.

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F.B. Ma tha feadhainn ann nach aithne dhut cò iad neo dè bhios iad ris, fàg  
bàr na litrichean agus na colbhan.

NA BUIDHNEAN

THA : CHAM EIL

Comann na Gàidhlig (CNAG)	A	B	C	D	E	:
in Comann Gàidhealach	A	B	C	D	E	:
Comhairle nan Sgoiltean						:
Iraich	A	B	C	D	E	:
Comann Luchd-ionnsachaidh						:
na Gàidhlig (CLI)	A	B	C	D	E	:
Colaisde Sabhal Mòr Ostaig	A	B	C	D	E	:
BBC Radio nan Gàidheal	A	B	C	D	E	:
Buidhnean phàrant airson						:
foghlaim Ghàidhlig	A	B	C	D	E	:
Na Comainn dhùthchail (mar						:
Chomann Leodhais agus na						:
Hearadh) ann an Glaschu	A	B	C	D	E	:
Comann Gàidhlig Inbhirnis	A	B	C	D	E	:
Comainn eachdraidh ionadail	A	B	C	D	E	:
Comann Fèis Bharraigh	A	B	C	D	E	:
Sgoil Eòlais na h-Alba	A	B	C	D	E	:
Acair	A	B	C	D	E	:
Gairm	A	B	C	D	E	:
Comann nan Leabhraichean	A	B	C	D	E	:
Na còisirean Gàidhlig	A	B	C	D	E	:
Na comainn Dhràma	A	B	C	D	E	:
Dearc	A	B	C	D	E	:
Iomhaigh	A	B	C	D	E	:
Guth na h-Oige	A	B	C	D	E	:
Sradag	A	B	C	D	E	:
A' Chòmhhdhail Cheilteach	A	B	C	D	E	:
Celtic Film Festival	A	B	C	D	E	:



Tha iomadh seòrsa foghlaim ri fhaighinn ann an deifir àiteachan agus aig deifir irean - eadar cuspairean, feallsanachd, poileasaidh, riaghailtean is mar sin air adhart.

Tha mi airson faighinn a-mach dè a dh'farradh tu fhèin do dh'òigridh de gach aois agus aig gach ire: ann an sgoil-àraich/cròileagan; ann am bun-sgoil; san àrd-sgoil; aig colaisde/oilthigh.

Chan'eil e gu deifir dè 'a aois a tha thu fhèin, no a bheil clann agad fhèin gus nach eil: tha mi airson dealbh a thogail de na beachdan agad co-dhiubh.

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Air na duilleagan a leanas chì thu ceithir clàir - feadhainn de na nithean a dh'fhaodadh òigridh fhaighinn ann am foghlam aig gach ire.

Tarraing cearcall timcheall air tè de na litrichean (A B C D E) a tha ri taobh gach nì air a' chlàr. Seo na tha na litrichean a' ciallachadh an turas seo:-

("Tha mi den bheachd ....")

A: gu bheil seo riatanach

B: gu bheil seo cudromach

C: gum faodadh seo bhith car cudromach

D: nach eil seo uamhasach cudromach

E: nach eil seo cudromach idir

(....."do dh'òigridh aig an ire seo")

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H.B. Cha leig thu leas cail ach sin a dhèanamh, ach ma tha thu airson rud-eigin eile a chur ris na clàir (nì air chor-eigin a shaoileas tu-fhèin a bu chòir a bhith ann) sgrìobh sin air na beàrnan aig deireadh gach clàir, agus comharraich tè de na litrichean ris taobh.

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2. BITHEAN A GHEIBHEAR ANN AN CROILEAGAN/SGOIL-ARAICH

Spòrs agus toil-inntinn	A	B	C	D	E
Smointean agus faclan ùra	A	B	C	D	E
Geamaichean agus dèideagan	A	B	C	D	E
Orain agus bàrdachd	A	B	C	D	E
Sgilean lainhe	A	B	C	D	E
Ealain (dealbhan is eile)	A	B	C	D	E
Eacarsaid chorpóra	A	B	C	D	E

A' fàs cleachda....

....ri inbhich seach an màthraichean fhèin	A	B	C	D	E
....ri smachd	A	B	C	D	E
....ri gabhail pàirt, agus rudan a roinn a-mach le clann eile	A	B	C	D	E
....ri bhith suidhe samhach	A	B	C	D	E

Ag ionnsachadh....

....a bhith modhail	A	B	C	D	E
....a bhith glan agus sgiobalta	A	B	C	D	E
....beagan cunntais	A	B	C	D	E
....beagan leughaidh is sgrìobhaidh	A	B	C	D	E

Cothrom clàbar a dhèanamh nach dèanadh iad aig an taigh	A	B	C	D	E
--	---	---	---	---	---

Cothrom dha na màthraichean a bhith tachairt 's a' bruidhinn ri chèile	A	B	C	D	E
--	---	---	---	---	---

Cothrom dha na màthraichean beagan fois fhaighinn bhon chloinn	A	B	C	D	E
---	---	---	---	---	---

Eile_____	A	B	C	D	E
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_____	A	B	C	D	E
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10. WITHEAM A GHEIBHEAR ANNS A' BHUN-SGOIL

Smachd is modh	A	B	C	D	E
Leughadh, sgrìobhadh 's cunntais	A	B	C	D	E
Litreachadh (speiligeadh)	A	B	C	D	E
Sgilean labhairt	A	B	C	D	E
Toil-inntinn	A	B	C	D	E

Comas....

....na beachdan aca fhèin a dhealbh	A	B	C	D	E
....sgeulachdan is bàrdachd a sgrìobhadh	A	B	C	D	E
....fiosrachadh a chumail air chuimhne	A	B	C	D	E
....fiosrachadh fhaighinn a leabhraichean	A	B	C	D	E

Eòlas....

....air a' choimhearsnachd aca fhèin	A	B	C	D	E
....air Aiteachan eile	A	B	C	D	E

Balain	A	B	C	D	E
Ceòl	A	B	C	D	E
Drama	A	B	C	D	E
Computadh	A	B	C	D	E
Creideamh na h-eaglaise aca fhèin	A	B	C	D	E
Eòlas air creideamhan eile	A	B	C	D	E
Cleasan is eacarsaid chorporra	A	B	C	D	E

Ag ionnsachadh a bhith....

....a' gabhail ùidh ann an iomadh rud	A	B	C	D	E
....a' dèanamh obair ghrinn sgiobalta	A	B	C	D	E
....coibhneil ri daoine eile	A	B	C	D	E

Bile_____	A	B	C	D	E
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11. MITHEAM A GHEIBHEAR 'SAM ARD-SGOIL

Buaidh ann an deuchainnean  
(de cho cudthromach airson)

a) caileagan A B C D E

b) balaich A B C D E

Bunait airson deagh  
theachd-an tìr

a) caileagan A B C D E

b) balaich A B C D E

Bunait airson dachaigh  
shona a dhéanamh

a) caileagan A B C D E

b) balaich A B C D E

Tuigse phoileataics

a) caileagan A B C D E

b) balaich A B C D E

Teicneolas-fiosrachaidh  
(computadh is eile)

a) caileagan A B C D E

b) balaich A B C D E

Ma h-ealain

a) caileagan A B C D E

b) balaich A B C D E

Eachdraidh is deògrafaidd  
an dùthcha fhèin

A B C D E

Eachdraidh is deògrafaidd  
dhùthchannan eile

A B C D E

Riaghailtean an cànan fhèin  
(litreachadh, gràmar etc)

A B C D E

Comas an cànan fhèin a chleachdadh  
gu h-inntinneach

A B C D E

Eòlas air cànanan eile

A B C D E

Eòlas air an cultar fhèin

A B C D E

Eòlas air cultaran eile

A B C D E

Deagh charaidean

A B C D E

Cur-seachadan

A B C D E

Cleasan is eacarsaid chorporra

A B C D E

Eile \_\_\_\_\_

A B C D E

**12. NITHEAN A GHEIBHEAR ANN AN COLAISDE NEO OILTHIGH**

Tréanadh obrach	a) boireannaich	A	B	C	D	E
	b) fireannaich	A	B	C	D	E
Leudachadh inntinn	a) boireannaich	A	B	C	D	E
	b) fireannaich	A	B	C	D	E
Buaidh ann an deuchainnean	a) boireannaich	A	B	C	D	E
	b) fireannaich	A	B	C	D	E
Cothrom tachairt ri daoine as áiteachan eile	a) boireannaich	A	B	C	D	E
	b) fireannaich	A	B	C	D	E
Beachdan is úidhean úra	a) boireannaich	A	B	C	D	E
	b) fireannaich	A	B	C	D	E
Saorsa bhon teaghlach agus bhon dachaigh aca fhéin	a) boireannaich	A	B	C	D	E
	b) fireannaich	A	B	C	D	E
Cothrom a bhith a' coimhead as an déidh fhéin	a) boireannaich	A	B	C	D	E
	b) fireannaich	A	B	C	D	E
Cur-seachadan taobh-a-stigh na colaisde/h-oilthighe	a) boireannaich	A	B	C	D	E
	b) fireannaich	A	B	C	D	E
Cur-seachadan taobh-a-muigh na colaisde/h-oilthighe	a) boireannaich	A	B	C	D	E
	b) fireannaich	A	B	C	D	E
Taic agus comhairle le duilgheadasan pearsanta	a) boireannaich	A	B	C	D	E
	b) fireannaich	A	B	C	D	E
Leabhar-lann farsaing		A	B	C	D	E
Acfhainn is stuth-teagasg adhartach		A	B	C	D	E
Oideachas sgoilearach		A	B	C	D	E
Tuigse phoileataiceach		A	B	C	D	E
Eile: _____		A	B	C	D	E

Air na duilleagan a leanas chi thu ceistean mu dhèidhinn na Colaisde Gàidhlig (Sabhal Nòr Ostaig).

Tha mi airson dà rud fhaighinn a-mach:

a) Dè is aithne dhut mun Cholaisde (na cùrsaichean a tha rim faighinn ann, is rudan mar sin)?

AGUS

b) Dè do bheachd fhèin mu dhèidhinn obair na Colaisde? A bheil i a' tairgsinn nan cùrsa as fhreagarraiche an-dràsda, agus dè seòrsa chùrsaichean a dh'fhaodadh i (no colaisde Ghàidhlig sam bith eile) tairgsinn anns na bliadhnaichean a tha romhainn?

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An turas seo chan e litrichean ach bocsaichean a tha ri taobh gach earrainn. Leugh gach ceist agus cuir comharra anns a' bhocsa (no anns na bocsaichean) freagarrach mar seo:

1 ✓ 1

Ma tha ceistean sam bith ann nach urrainn dhut freagairt fàg bàn na bocsaichean. CHAN E DEUCHAINN A TH'ANN IDIR!

12. A' CHOLAISDE GHÀIDHLIG (SABHAL MOR OSTAIG)

i. Cia mheud oileanach làn-aimsireil a tha anns a' Cholaisde an bliadhna?

Eadar 5 is 10 ☐ Eadar 10 is 20 ☐

Eadar 20 is 30 ☐ Tuilleadh is 30 ☐

ii. Dè na cùrsaichean a tha rim faighinn sa Cholaisde an dràsda?

Aiteachas ☐ Na h-ealain ☐

Na meadhannan ("media studies") ☐

Litreachas Gàidhlig ☐ Ceòl Gàidhlig ☐

Fiosrachadh-teicneolais (computadh is mar sin air adhart) ☐

Gnìomhachas ("business studies") ☐

Eachdraidh is deògrafaich Gàidhealach ☐

Ceàird thraidiseanta (breabadairachd is eile) ☐

iii. Dè an cànan a bhios na h-oileanaich a' cleachdadh sa Cholaisde?

Gàidhlig is Beurla a-rèir 's dè chuspair a bhios ann ☐

Gàidhlig: a' chuid as motha den ùine ☐ fad na h-ùine ☐

iv. Dè an cànan a bhios na h-oileanach a' cleachdadh sna deuchainnean?

Gàidhlig ☐ Beurla ☐

Gàidhlig is Beurla a-rèir 's dè chuspair a th'ann ☐

v. A bheil barantas ("diploma") aithnichte ri fhaighinn aig deireadh nan cùrsa?

Tha ☐ Chan eil ☐

vi. A bheil thu fhèin an dùil a dhol dhan Cholaisde Ghàidhlig, (no am bitheadh, nam bitheadh a leithid ann an-uair a bha thu na b'òige?)

Tha/no bhithinn ☐ 'S dòcha ☐ Chan eil/no cha bhithinn ☐

\*Carson? (ma thogras tu) \_\_\_\_\_

vi. Nam bitheadh tusa a' ruith colaisde Ghàidhlig dè na cùrsaichean, as na leanas, a dh'iarradh tu a thairgsinn nan gabhadh e dèanamh?

Cùrsaichean iomlan do luchd-ionneachaidh na Gàidhlig | ☐ |

Trèanadh do luchd-eagraidh nan cròileagan Gàidhlig | ☐ |

Trèanadh do luchd-teagasg nam bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig | ☐ |

Trèanadh do thidsearan Gàidhlig san Àrd-sgoil | ☐ |

Cùrsaichean còmhnaidh do chlann sna sgoiltean Gàidhlig | ☐ |

Cùrsaichean do luchd-obrach sna seirbhisean sòisealta | ☐ |

Cùrsaichean do nùrsaichean sa Ghàidhealtachd | ☐ |

Cùrsaichean dhan phoilis " " | ☐ |

Cùrsaichean ann an lagh croitearachd agus fearainn | ☐ |

Ministrealachd Ghàidhlig | ☐ | Na meadhannan | ☐ |

Teicneolas-fiosrachaidh | ☐ | Gnìomhachas | ☐ |

Turasachd | ☐ | Poileataics | ☐ | Aiteachas | ☐ |

Biadh is òsdaireachd | ☐ | Eaconomachd-thaighe | ☐ |

Pollaiseachd is sgilean-margaidh | ☐ | Eachdraidh Ghàidhealach | ☐ |

Ceòl is beul-aithris Ghàidhlig | ☐ | Litreachas Ghàidhlig | ☐ |

Ceòl electronaiceach | ☐ | Ceàird thraidiseanta | ☐ |

Bile \_\_\_\_\_

vii. Dè an cànan a chleachdadh iad sa cholaisde nam bitheadh tusa ga ruith?

Gàidhlig is Beurla a-rèir 's dè chuspair a bh'ann | ☐ |

Gàidhlig: a' mhòr-chuid den ùine | ☐ | fad na h-ùine | ☐ |

viii. Nam bitheadh a leithid sin de chùrsaichean rin tairgsinn ann an colaisde Ghàidhlig, an rachadh tu fhèin ann mar oileanach (no am bitheadh tu air a dhol ann an-uair a bha thu na b'òige?)

Rachainn/bhithinn | ☐ | 'S dòcha | ☐ | Cha rachainn/cha bhithinn | ☐ |

CEUD TALNG AIRSON NA CEISTEAN A FHREAGAIRT - THA SINN FADA NAD CHOMAIN!



QUESTIONNAIRE  
Gaelic in Education  
(TRANSLATED FROM GAELIC)

Department of Education  
Glasgow University

*in conjunction with*

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig  
(Gaelic College)

me: \_\_\_\_\_

dress: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

wn or district (if not given above): \_\_\_\_\_

ace of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

e (approximate): \_\_\_\_\_

r first language: \_\_\_\_\_

upation: \_\_\_\_\_

t occupation (if retired, unemployed etc): \_\_\_\_\_

ar in secondary (if still at school): \_\_\_\_\_

t do you hope to do on leaving school? \_\_\_\_\_

ar of study (if college/university student): \_\_\_\_\_

of course being studied at present: \_\_\_\_\_

t career do you hope to pursue? (on completion of studies)

ganisations etc connected with Gaelic in which you have been involved:

-1-

The following pages are some of the varying opinions held by  
parent people - opinions about education, and Gaelic, and Gaelic  
education.

For each opinion in turn: do you agree or disagree, and how strongly do  
you agree or disagree?

Indicate how strongly you feel about each opinion by circling one of the  
letters (A B C D E) :-

A: I agree very much with this

B: I agree with this

C: I don't feel strongly one way or the other about this

D: I disagree with this

E: I disagree very much with this

---

This is all that is required in this section, but if you feel you  
would like to add any comment to any of the choices you have made there  
is space left for this purpose.

1. LANGUAGE AND CULTURE - IN GENERAL

i. Bilingualism (the ability to speak more than one language) is a very useful thing, no matter what the languages.

A B C D E

---

---

ii. Nowadays, with the importance of English throughout the world, there's no point in speaking a minority language like Gaelic.

A B C D E

---

---

iii. In a multi-cultural country like Scotland the Government ought to support every culture and language.

A B C D E

---

---

iv. Difference of language and culture makes hostility arise between people.

A B C D E

---

---

v. Lack of understanding of different languages and cultures makes hostility arise between people.

A B C D E

---

---

vi. No-one can understand other cultures if they don't understand their own.

A B C D E

---

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-3-

vii. The Government ought not to give any more support to Gaelic than it does to any other ethnic or minority language in Scotland - like Urdu, Chinese, Italian, and so on.

A B C D E

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viii. The Government ought to give special encouragement to Gaelic, as the hereditary language of Scotland.

A B C D E

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ix. The Government ought to give the same support to Lowland Scots culture as it gives to the culture of the Gaels in Scotland.

A B C D E

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x. The Government should recognise Gaelic as an official British language.

A B C D E

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xi. The Gaels will not grow self-confident until they have confidence in their own language and culture.

A B C D E

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xii. The Gaels would become more self-confident and go-ahead if they would turn their backs on a language and culture belonging to days gone by.

A B C D E

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-4-

ii. A people cannot find a solution to today's problems without knowledge and understanding of their own history and culture.

A B C D E

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iv. The world will be a poor place if every country and people become the same, in their culture, language and customs, through the influence of television and the other media.

A B C D E

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v. Peace will not be achieved in the world unless people become more similar in culture, language and custom.

A B C D E

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vi. Peace will not be achieved in the world until people's rights to maintain their own language and culture are upheld.

A B C D E

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vii. It would make more sense to spend money on promoting the priceless culture of the Gael worldwide than on resuscitating Gaelic as a language of daily neighbourhood use.

A B C D E

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viii. From time to time small ancient languages go out of existence whatever measures are taken to preserve them: as Gaelic has become so weakened in Scotland it would be better to let it die, like Cornish or Manx.

A B C D E

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GAELIC IN EDUCATION - PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN

It is a good thing to send children to a play-group or nursery-school before they go to primary school.

A B C D E

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The home, mother's knee, is the best "nursery" of all for young children.

A B C D E

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1. Children who expect to go to a Gaelic primary school or unit ought to speak that language in the play-group or nursery.

A B C D E

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If children expect to go to an English-medium primary there's no point in their speaking Gaelic at the play-group or nursery they attend.

A B C D E

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Children from Gaelic-speaking homes ought to play with other children through the medium of Gaelic so that they will learn to enjoy using the language of their parents.

A B C D E

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The Gaels ought to run Gaelic play-groups for themselves if they want them.

A B C D E

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-6-

The authorities run English nursery schools to prepare children for entering the primary school: by the same token they ought to provide Gaelic nursery schools wherever they have established Gaelic primary schools or units.

A B C D E

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If a Gaelic play-group is to be effective Gaelic must be spoken all the time (except perhaps in an emergency) even when there are non-Gaelic speakers present.

A B C D E

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Parents who move into Highland areas from the outside ought to give support to Gaelic as the hereditary language of the area.

A B C D E

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It's people who come from outside, and try to run things like play-groups their own way, who become one of the greatest threats to Gaelic in Highland communities.

A B C D E

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The spinelessness of Gaels who turn to English whenever there is even a non-Gaelic speaker in the company is a bigger threat by far.

A B C D E

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The laziness of Gaels who speak English to their children will finish the language off however many Gaelic play-groups are run.

A B C D E

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ELIC IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOL

's all very well teaching Gaelic as a primary school subject, but as sh is so important throughout the world it's a piece of nonsense to children through the medium of Gaelic.

A B C D E

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Considering how short of money the primary schools are it's a aceful waste of money to spend it on Gaelic education.

A B C D E

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Considering the scarcity of Gaelic books and teaching-materials it endanger children's education to teach through the medium of Gaelic.

A B C D E

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---

s English is in a position of such strength Gaelic is going to go out stance if children don't have Gaelic-medium education, at least in rimary school.

A B C D E

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---

ollowing generations of neglect it is high time the authorities gave encouragement to Gaelic education regardless of cost.

A B C D E

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The more Gaelic primary schools are established the easier it will e to get books and teaching-materials produced.

A B C D E

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It would be better to teach some children through the medium of Gaelic separate units or schools than to give a little Gaelic to every child in primary whether they wanted it or not.

A B C D E

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Separate Gaelic units or primary schools would create divisions in families and communities.

A B C D E

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Children can't learn through the medium of Gaelic full-time, as appropriate vocabulary does not exist for some of the subjects they receive in primary school.

A B C D E

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Instead of saying that certain subjects are hard to teach through the medium of Gaelic, the authorities ought to give appropriate training to teachers who are involved in Gaelic-medium education.

A B C D E

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If people begin to use Gaelic for subjects which are alien to the way of life and philosophy of the Gael, Gaelic will be devalued and diluted.

A B C D E

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There's no point in keeping Gaelic alive as a traditional language which cannot adapt to every situation that arises in the twentieth century.

A B C D E

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GAELIC IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL

It's all very well speaking Gaelic to children in the primary school, but when they reach the age of twelve it's time for them to turn their backs on the narrow world of home and family.

A B C D E

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Fluent speakers, who have already had Gaelic-medium education in the primary school, should learn every subject through the medium of Gaelic if they so desire, as soon as courses are ready for them.

A B C D E

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1. It's all very well teaching Gaelic as a secondary school subject, but it would jeopardise children's performance in exams if they learned other subjects through the medium of Gaelic.

A B C D E

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Instead of saying that it will keep children back to learn through Gaelic in secondary school, the authorities ought to give appropriate training to teachers and prepare Gaelic-medium examination papers, as they have done in Wales.

A B C D E

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It's inappropriate to compare Scottish Gaelic to Welsh - the political situation is very different in Scotland, and it can't be changed.

A B C D E

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The Gaels ought to strive to change the political situation, using their language as their flagship, just as the Welsh did with theirs.

A B C D E

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Gaelic has been offered as a secondary school subject for many years, the numbers of pupils who have chosen it in preference to French prove that there is insufficient interest to justify increasing Gaelic education.

A B C D E

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1. It is not lack of interest in Gaelic which has held it back as a secondary school subject, but the low status of the language in general compared with a big "important" language like French).

A B C D E

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In a world where everyone speaks English anyway, young people who learn through the medium of Gaelic are getting an extra advantage over those who learn the same subjects through English.

A B C D E

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Young people have different needs depending on where they live, and education ought to take account of these needs.

A B C D E

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The Government are suggesting that all young people throughout the country ought to have the same, uniform education, but this argument is based not on young people's needs but on cutting costs.

A B C D E

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Gaelic in College or University

Any student in any country ought to have the opportunity of studying through the medium of his own language if he chooses.

A B C D E

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The courses which young people get in secondary school at present do prepare them for Gaelic-medium education at College.

A B C D E

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---

Young Gaels will not become self-confident if it is not proved to them that Gaelic is just as effective a language as any other for every subject every stage of education.

A B C D E

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Considering how scarce work is nowadays it is imprudent to train in a small provincial college (like Sabhal Mòr Ostaig) through the medium of a small provincial language like Gaelic.

A B C D E

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The numbers of young people who go to universities and colleges in the Highlands, the majority of whom do not return, weakens the Gaidhealtachd.

A B C D E

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If Gaels attend college in the Gaidhealtachd instead of in the wide world of the city they will get only a narrow view-point which will do nothing to revitalise the Highlands and Islands.

A B C D E

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It would be more appropriate to teach the history, literature and music of the Gael in a Gaelic college, and leave more wide-based education to the big established colleges.

A B C D E

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11. The universities already do enough to teach and research Gaelic history, literature and tradition - the Gaelic College should offer more practical subjects.

A B C D E

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The special problems of the Gaidhealtachd will not be solved unless special insights and skills are taught to local people, by local people, in the locality itself.

A B C D E

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---

The special problems of the Gaidhealtachd will not be solved unless special insights and skills are taught to local people, by local people, in the locality, through the medium of the local, native language.

A B C D E

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The best way of solving the problems of the Gaidhealtachd is to give students the opportunity of learning suitable skills among the go-ahead people of the city.

A B C D E

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The Gaelic College should provide special training for those teachers already involved in Gaelic-medium education.

A B C D E

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In the universities Gaelic is taught and researched as an ancient language, rather than a living twentieth century language.

A B C D E

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---

The Gaelic College ought to promote Gaelic as a living language by using modern literature, music and drama, and encouraging the development of writing, acting and performing skills.

A B C D E

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The universities are not doing enough public political lobbying on behalf of Gaelic.

A B C D E

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The Gaelic College ought to be in the fore-front of public political lobbying on behalf of Gaelic.

A B C D E

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The Gaelic College (Sabhal Mor Ostaig) ought to encourage Gaelic by using skills (such as politics and broadcasting) which young people can put to direct use on behalf of the language in the future.

A B C D E

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1. The Gaelic College ought to avoid the reputation of being a highly official place, for fear it will lose official support.

A B C D E

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-14-

The Gaelic College is situated in the wrong place - the Island of Skye  
is too Anglicised ("Gallda").

A B C D E

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The Island of Skye is all right for a Gaelic College, but Sleat is far  
remote.

A B C D E

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The Island of Skye is very suitable for a Gaelic College, since it is  
old-famous place of great historic interest.

A B C D E

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The Island of Skye is very suitable for a Gaelic College since it is  
fairly open-minded place as regards religion, compared with some other  
islands in the Hebrides.

A B C D E

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4. The Island of Skye is very suitable since it is in those places  
where Gaelic has declined most sharply that people make the most effort to  
revive it.

A B C D E

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Instead of complaining about the one Gaelic college they have, the  
people ought to try and establish other Gaelic-medium colleges, to serve  
communities and teach other subject-areas.

A B C D E

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On the next page is a list of names - some of the authorities, and groups, and companies who deal with Gaelic among other things in their remit.

I want to find out two things:

a) In your opinion, how important an effect does each of them have upon the state of Gaelic, whether for the better or for the worse?

AND

b) Given the powers they have, are they doing enough at present to encourage Gaelic, or should they be doing more?

---

a) Circle one of the letters (A B C D E) beside each name, as follows:-

A: extremely important

B: important

C: could be important

D: not very important

E: not important at all

AND

b) Tick one of the columns beside each name:-

YES: if you think they are doing sufficient  
to encourage Gaelic at present,

OR

NO: if you think they are not.

---

I.B. If you are uncertain who or what any of the groups are, or what their function is, leave the letters and columns blank.

6. THE AUTHORITIES

						YES	NO
The National Government	A	B	C	D	E	:	:
The Labour Party	A	B	C	D	E	:	:
The Liberal Party	A	B	C	D	E	:	:
The SDP	A	B	C	D	E	:	:
The SNP	A	B	C	D	E	:	:
The Scottish Education Dept	A	B	C	D	E	:	:
The Arts Council	A	B	C	D	E	:	:
The Highlands and Islands Development Board	A	B	C	D	E	:	:
Comhairle nan Eilean	A	B	C	D	E	:	:
Highland Regional Council	A	B	C	D	E	:	:
Strathclyde Regional Council	A	B	C	D	E	:	:
The other Regional Councils within Scotland	A	B	C	D	E	:	:
The District Councils within the Gaelic-speaking areas	A	B	C	D	E	:	:
The Churches	A	B	C	D	E	:	:
B.B.C Scotland	A	B	C	D	E	:	:
Grampian T.V	A	B	C	D	E	:	:
Scottish Television	A	B	C	D	E	:	:
West Highland Free Press	A	B	C	D	E	:	:
Stornoway Gazette	A	B	C	D	E	:	:
Oban Times	A	B	C	D	E	:	:
National newspapers within Scotland	A	B	C	D	E	:	:

On the next page is a list of names - some of the groups, or companies, who deal with Gaelic all the time.

I want to find out two things:

a) How useful, in your opinion, is the work of each group, or company, in encouraging Gaelic?

AND

b) which of the groups, or companies, ought to receive more financial support in order to increase their work?

---

a) Circle one of the letters (A B C D E) beside each name to indicate how useful you consider their work:-

A: extremely useful

B: useful

C: could be useful

D: not very useful

E: not useful at all

AND

b) tick one of the columns beside each name:

YES: if you think they should receive more  
financial support in order to increase  
their work

OR

NO: if you think they should not.

---

N.B. If you are uncertain as to who any of the groups are or what they do leave the letters and columns blank.

7. THE GROUPS

						YES	NO
Comann na Gàidhlig (CWAG)	A	B	C	D	E	:	:
An Comann Gàidhealach	A	B	C	D	E	:	:
CNSA (Gaelic Playgroup Assoc)	A	B	C	D	E	:	:
CLI (Gaelic-learners Assoc)	A	B	C	D	E	:	:
Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (Gaelic College)	A	B	C	D	E	:	:
BBC Radio nan Gàidheal	A	B	C	D	E	:	:
Parent Associations for Gaelic Education	A	B	C	D	E	:	:
Glasgow Territorial Assocs (e.g. Lewis and Harris)	A	B	C	D	E	:	:
Gaelic Society of Inverness	A	B	C	D	E	:	:
Local history societies	A	B	C	D	E	:	:
Barra Festival	A	B	C	D	E	:	:
School of Scottish Studies	A	B	C	D	E	:	:
Acair	A	B	C	D	E	:	:
Gairm	A	B	C	D	E	:	:
Comann nan Leabhraichean (Gaelic Books Society)	A	B	C	D	E	:	:
Gaelic Choirs	A	B	C	D	E	:	:
Drama Assocs	A	B	C	D	E	:	:
Dearc	A	B	C	D	E	:	:
Ionbhaigh	A	B	C	D	E	:	:
Guth na h-Oige	A	B	C	D	E	:	:
Sradag	A	B	C	D	E	:	:
The Celtic Congress	A	B	C	D	E	:	:
Celtic Film Festival	A	B	C	D	E	:	:

ifferent types of education are to be found in different places and at different stages - as regards subjects, philosophy, policy, regulations and so on.

I want to find out what you yourself would wish for young people of every age and at each stage: in nursery school or play-group; in primary; in secondary; at college/university.

It makes no difference what age you are yourself, or whether you have children or not: I want to form a picture of your opinions anyway.

---

On the following pages you will find four lists - some of the things which young people might receive from education at each stage.

Circle one of the letters (A B C D E) beside each item on each list. This is what the letters represent this time:-

"I am of the opinion ....")

A: that this is essential

B: that this is important

C: that this could be quite important

D: that this is not particularly important

E: that this is not at all important

(....."for young people at this stage")

---

B. You don't have to do anything else, but if you feel like adding anything to the lists (any item that you yourself feel should have been included) write it in the spaces after each list, and mark one of the letters beside it.

---

9. WHAT MAY BE GAINED IN NURSERY SCHOOLS/PLAY-GROUPS

Good fun	A	B	C	D	E
New concepts and words	A	B	C	D	E
Becoming accustomed					
....to taking part, and sharing, with other children	A	B	C	D	E
....to sitting quietly	A	B	C	D	E
Learning.....					
....to be polite	A	B	C	D	E
....to be neat and tidy	A	B	C	D	E
....a little counting	A	B	C	D	E
....a little reading and writing	A	B	C	D	E
The chance to make the kind of mess they couldn't make at home	A	B	C	D	E
A chance for the mothers to meet and talk together	A	B	C	D	E
A chance for the mothers to get a bit of peace from the children	A	B	C	D	E
Other _____	A	B	C	D	E
_____	A	B	C	D	E

10. WHAT MAY BE GAINED IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

discipline and manners	A	B	C	D	E
reading, writing & arithmetic	A	B	C	D	E
telling	A	B	C	D	E
spoken language skills	A	B	C	D	E
measure	A	B	C	D	E

The ability....

....to form their own opinions	A	B	C	D	E
....to write poems and stories	A	B	C	D	E
....to memorise information	A	B	C	D	E
....to find information from books	A	B	C	D	E

Knowledge....

....of their own environment	A	B	C	D	E
....of other places	A	B	C	D	E
....of their own country	A	B	C	D	E
....of the world	A	B	C	D	E
....of the history of their own country	A	B	C	D	E
....of the history of the world	A	B	C	D	E
....of the religion of their own church	A	B	C	D	E
....of other faiths	A	B	C	D	E
....of the geography of their own country	A	B	C	D	E
....of the geography of the world	A	B	C	D	E
....of the science of their own country	A	B	C	D	E
....of the science of the world	A	B	C	D	E
....of the art and physical exercise	A	B	C	D	E

Learning to....

....take a wide interest in things	A	B	C	D	E
....do neat tidy work	A	B	C	D	E
....be kind to others	A	B	C	D	E
....be brave	A	B	C	D	E
....be honest	A	B	C	D	E
....be obedient	A	B	C	D	E
....be self-reliant	A	B	C	D	E
....be able to work with others	A	B	C	D	E
....be able to work alone	A	B	C	D	E
....be able to work in a team	A	B	C	D	E
....be able to work in a group	A	B	C	D	E
....be able to work in a class	A	B	C	D	E
....be able to work in a school	A	B	C	D	E
....be able to work in a community	A	B	C	D	E
....be able to work in a country	A	B	C	D	E
....be able to work in a world	A	B	C	D	E

WHAT MAY BE GAINED AT SECONDARY SCHOOL

Success in exams (how important for)	a) girls	A	B	C	D	E
	b) boys	A	B	C	D	E
Foundation for a good livelihood	a) girls	A	B	C	D	E
	b) boys	A	B	C	D	E
Foundation for making happy home-life	a) girls	A	B	C	D	E
	b) boys	A	B	C	D	E
Political understanding	a) girls	A	B	C	D	E
	b) boys	A	B	C	D	E
Information technology (computing etc)	a) girls	A	B	C	D	E
	b) boys	A	B	C	D	E
Arts	a) girls	A	B	C	D	E
	b) boys	A	B	C	D	E
History and geography of their own country		A	B	C	D	E
History and geography of other countries		A	B	C	D	E
Understanding of the underlying rules of their own language (grammar, spelling etc)		A	B	C	D	E
Ability to use their own language creatively		A	B	C	D	E
Knowledge of other languages		A	B	C	D	E
Knowledge of their own culture		A	B	C	D	E
Knowledge of other cultures		A	B	C	D	E
Friendships		A	B	C	D	E
Skills		A	B	C	D	E
Sport and physical exercise		A	B	C	D	E
Other _____		A	B	C	D	E



2. WHAT MAY BE GAINED AT COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY

vocational (work) training	a) women	A	B	C	D	E
	b) men	A	B	C	D	E
broadening of the mind	a) women	A	B	C	D	E
	b) men	A	B	C	D	E
success in exams	a) women	A	B	C	D	E
	b) men	A	B	C	D	E
opportunity to meet people from different places	a) women	A	B	C	D	E
	b) men	A	B	C	D	E
new ideas and interests	a) women	A	B	C	D	E
	b) men	A	B	C	D	E
freedom from their home and family	a) women	A	B	C	D	E
	b) men	A	B	C	D	E
chance to learn to look after themselves	a) women	A	B	C	D	E
	b) men	A	B	C	D	E
leisure activities within the college/university	a) women	A	B	C	D	E
	b) men	A	B	C	D	E
leisure activities	a) women	A	B	C	D	E
	b) men	A	B	C	D	E
support and counselling with personal problems	a) women	A	B	C	D	E
	b) men	A	B	C	D	E
well-stocked library		A	B	C	D	E
up-to-date equipment and teaching material		A	B	C	D	E
scholarly tutelage		A	B	C	D	E
political understanding		A	B	C	D	E
other: _____		A	B	C	D	E

-24-

On the following pages you will see questions relating to the Gaelic College in Skye (Sabhal Mor Ostaig).

Want to find out two things:

What do you know about the College (the courses which are available and so on)?

What is your personal opinion about the work of the College? Is it presently offering the most appropriate courses, and what type of courses do you think it (or any other Gaelic college) offer in years to come?

---

At the time there are boxes instead of letters beside each item. Read each question and put a mark in the appropriate box (or boxes) as follows:

☒ ☐ ☐

If there are any questions which you cannot immediately answer leave the space blank. IT'S NOT AN EXAM!

THE GAELIC COLLEGE (SABHAL MOR OSTAIG)

How many full-time students are attending this year?

Between 5 and 10 ☐ Between 10 and 20 ☐  
Between 20 and 30 ☐ More than 30 ☐

What courses are currently available in the College?

Agriculture ☐ The Arts ☐  
Media Studies ☐  
Gaelic Literature ☐ Gaelic music ☐  
Information Technology (computing etc) ☐  
Business studies ☐  
Highland history and geography ☐  
Traditional crafts (weaving etc) ☐

What language do the students use in the College?

Gaelic and English, depending on the subject ☐  
Gaelic: most of the time ☐ all the time ☐

What language do the students use in their examinations?

Gaelic ☐ English ☐  
Gaelic and English, depending on the subject ☐

Is a recognised qualification received at the end of the courses?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Do you hope to go to the Gaelic College, (or would you have gone there if it had been in existence when you were younger?)

Yes ☐ Maybe ☐ No ☐

Why not? (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

If you were running a Gaelic college, what courses would you wish to  
if possible? Choose from the following:-

Intensive courses for Gaelic learners ☐

Training courses for Gaelic play-group organisers ☐

Training for teachers in Gaelic primary schools ☐

Training for Gaelic secondary school teachers ☐

Residential courses for Gaelic school pupils ☐

Courses for those working in the social services ☐

Courses for nurses in the Gaidhealtachd ☐

Courses for police " " " ☐

Courses in crofting and land laws ☐

Gaelic ministry (i.e. church) ☐ The media ☐

Information Technology ☐ Business studies ☐

Tourism ☐ Politics ☐ Agriculture ☐

Catering and hotel management ☐ Home economics ☐

Publicity and marketing-skills ☐ Highland history ☐

Gaelic music and tradition ☐ Gaelic literature ☐

Electronic music ☐ Traditional crafts ☐

Other(s) \_\_\_\_\_

What would be the language of use in the college if you ran it?

Gaelic and English according to the subject ☐

Gaelic: most of the time ☐ all the time ☐

If those types of course were on offer in a Gaelic college, would you  
here as a student (or would you have when you were younger?)

Yes ☐ Maybe ☐ No ☐

THANKS INDEED FOR ANSWERING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE!

### APPENDIX THREE: STUDY VISIT TO WALES

*A report*

*"all the various dances of humankind are beautiful"*

*(Kunene, 1988: 176)*

### APPENDIX THREE: STUDY VISIT TO WALES

*A report*

*"all the various dances of humankind are beautiful"*

*(Kunene, 1988: 176)*

## 1 Introduction

1.1 The following report has been produced as the result of a week's school observation in Wales. Many such pilgrimages have been undertaken by Scottish Gaels in recent years (e.g. Grand, 1983 - Wales and Northern Ireland; MacIver, 1989 - Wales; Pedersen, 1989 - Galicia) though typically the results are translated into educational or community-related developmental practice rather than documentary reportage. Response to myriad educational phenomena, observed hurriedly over an all-too-short space of time, is almost inevitably impressionistic and subjective as to what catches eye and ear. Thus what follows is written discursively, making no attempt at academic comparison with other data of similar nature. Reference is made at certain points to comparable situations in Scotland, but again, this is unsystematic: the relevance of what was observed will be self-evident from foregoing chapters.

1.2 My visit was greatly enhanced by the assistance of Gwynedd County Council Primary Advisory Service. I was enabled to have unusually detailed and leisurely discussion with staff at all levels: by chance my visit coincided with a fact-finding exercise whereby ten newly-appointed Welsh-medium Head Teachers from Gwynedd visited West Glamorgan to observe schools and exchange ideas. Travelling with these highly-committed and experienced teachers for two days, and taking part in their uninhibited group sessions - plays within a play - gave unusual depth to the exercise, and their highly critical assessment of much of what they observed helped to retain an element of rational judgement in what sometimes seems - at least in

comparison with the Scottish situation - linguistic Wonderland. The itinerary was as follows:-

**1.2.1 Monday 27th March 1989: Llanberis, County Gwynedd**

Lunch with Primary & Nursery Advisers

p.m. Visit Ysgol Dolbadarn Llanberis

*(Llanberis Local School)*

**Tuesday 28th March 1989: Holyhead, County Gwynedd**

a.m. Visit Ysgol Babanod Coed Mawr

*(Coed Mawr Infant School)*

Visit Ysgol Gynradd Llaingoch

*(Llaingoch Primary School)*

Lunch with Athrawon Bro

*(Peripatetic Welsh teachers)*

p.m. Visit Ysgol Gynradd Llanfawr

*(Llanfawr Primary School)*

Visit Ysgol Gynradd Morswyn

*(Morswyn Primary School)*

Dinner with Primary & Nursery Advisers

**Wednesday 1st March 1989: Llangyby, County Gwynedd**

a.m. Visit Ysgol Gynradd Llangyby

*(Llangyby Reception Centre)*



**Bangor, County Gwynedd**

Lunch with Bangor Normal College Staff:

Reception and Book Launch

**Swansea, West Glamorgan**

Dinner with Gwynedd Advisers, Headteachers

**Thursday 2nd March 1989: Swansea, West Glamorgan**

a.m. Visit Ysgol Gymraeg Castell Nedd

*(Castle Neath Welsh P. School)*

Visit Ysgol Meithrin Castell Nedd

*(Castle Neath Nursery)*

Lunch with Gwynedd Advisers, Headteachers

p.m. Visit Ysgol Gyfin Ystalyfera

*(Ystalyfera Welsh Secondary)*

Visit Primary Reception Centre

Dinner with Gwynedd and W. Glam. officials

**Friday 3rd March 1989: Cardiff, South Glamorgan**

a.m. Visit Ysgol Wern

*(Wern Welsh Primary)*

Visit Ysgol Llanishen Fach

*(Llanishen Fach Welsh Unit)*

Lunch with staff, Llanishen Fach

p.m. Visit Ysgol Melin Gryfydd

*(Melin Gryfydd Welsh Primary)*

## 2 General background

2.1 Welsh has been designated a *core* subject in Welsh-medium and bilingual schools throughout Wales, a *foundation* subject in all other schools: that is to say, Welsh is a compulsory element in the national curriculum for all schools unless - and it may prove an achillean qualification - schools seek special dispensation from the Secretary of State for Wales. However the Welsh Secretary adopted an uncompromising stance in a recent press statement (Walker: Welsh Office, 20.7.88) which makes it clear that present policies are designed as much to introduce Welsh to the anglophone majority as to maintain present levels of bilingualism among the minority:

2.1.1 Only one in five Welshmen enjoy this fine inheritance at the present time. Our aim is to give the 80% who are English-speaking Welshmen the opportunity to learn Welsh so that they and their children can reap the benefits of a rich and historic language" (Walker, *op cit*).

2.2 There is little doubt that proper implementation of this policy will pose considerable problems of teacher-supply and funding. The Director of Education for Gwent (one of the most anglicised of the counties, with only ten of its secondary schools at present teaching Welsh) made a public announcement, broadcast on BBC Wales News during my stay in Wales (March 1st, 1989), officially welcoming the Government's proposal to make Welsh available to all pupils, but warning against token or piece-meal provision. He estimated that phasing-in of "effective" bilingual teaching programmes in his county alone will cost in the region of £2½m, and called on the

Government to underwrite this. However there seems to be some doubt as to the ultimate worth of such expressions of official good-will. Morgan (1988) presumes "that all schools not now teaching Welsh at all (30 in number) plus some of those now teaching it as a second language only (118 schools - 49.8% of the total number of schools in Wales) will successfully seek to opt out". Indeed shortly after Morgan's article was written the "Times Educational Supplement" reported on grassroots reaction to the element of compulsion, stating that three of Gwent's secondary schools were already planning to seek dispensation, on the grounds not only of teacher shortage but also on the grounds (often quoted with regard to compulsory Gaelic in Ireland) that making Welsh compulsory may prove counter-productive:

2.3 "As Mr. Colin Powell, head of Bettws comprehensive school, Newport, put it: 'The governors want to see Welsh-as-a-second-language introduced as a properly resourced option. But, if enforced, they are afraid that it could lead to an anti-Welsh backlash in the school. They believe that the language should be made available - but to be successful it must be introduced with the goodwill and support of parents and pupils'" (Smith, TES, 24.3.89).

2.4 Gwent's situation is complicated by its contiguity with England: it is flanked by Gloucestershire, Hereford and Worcester, and many English children travel daily across the border to school: in Monmouth Comprehensive School 15% of the children are reported to be English (ibid), and the school governors have indicated that it would be "inappropriate" to require such children to learn the Welsh language (ibid) - which would seem

to be at odds with the stated Welsh Office position unless, of course, one reads a degree of disingenuous political obscurantism into the expression "English-speaking Welshman" (Walker, op cit). It would seem that a "Welshman" is in urgent need of definition in the present circumstances.

2.5 There has been a steady influx, over the years, of English "immigrants" into most parts of Wales (Betts, 1976). Of late Betts' seminal prognostic work seems borne out, with Welsh culture ever more evidently in "crisis" (ibid) - especially in the heartland areas:

2.5.1 "Schools which ten or twenty years ago were virtually entirely Welsh-speaking, and which could gallicise the occasional new arrival, now often have only small numbers of native speakers on their rolls. The small size of these schools has meant that sometimes the arrival of a single family could change the linguistic balance of a school" (Morgan, 1988: 251).

2.6 Such circumstances put severe pressure on existent Welsh-medium provision in traditional linguistic strongholds such as Gwynedd, and cause tension and counter-tension to appear or grow in many communities. Thus Williams (1987) questions the worth of continuing to promote Welsh-medium education, suggesting that the demand comes from "the lobbyists and not the Welsh people" and are acceded to for crude political gain: "For political reasons - the Tories have several marginal seats in Welsh-speaking Wales - the Government finds it difficult to resist the demands" (Williams, TES, 20.2.87). This article, written by a Ph D student currently completing a thesis on "the anglicisation of Wales" (footnote, ibid), revolves around

Williams' belief in the inexorability of language shift (cf Paulston, 1982, for a somewhat similar critique of public expenditure on bilingual education in Sweden):

2.6.1 "Quite simply, the Welsh-speaking areas, in spite of considerable central and local government support, are ceasing to be Welsh heartlands, while the English speaking areas, in which so many bilingual schools are to be found, can in no way compensate for the loss" (Williams, op cit).

2.7 Such arguments (though refuted in subsequent correspondence - TES, 20.3.87) may perpetuate tenacious monoculturalist prejudices, as witnessed by a corroborative letter, written from "the heartland, where this dubious human experiment is taking place" - an experiment which results

2.7.1 "in a negative attitude towards the school, reinforced by unhelpful teachers. To quote one child: 'The teachers do not like the English children, particularly the Welsh Nationalist teachers'. No doubt a distorted view, but none the less real to the child!" (Britton, TES: 20.3.87).

2.8 There can be little doubt that such "distorted views" originate in the home rather than the school. The resultant conflicts (viz "the arson campaign...has come to symbolise this more general fear of cultural and linguistic erosion", Balsom, 18.10.88) are not addressed by less than tactful official handling of potentially explosive situations.

2.9 A fairly extreme example of this emerges in recent reports from Aberystwyth, Dyfed - information imparted to the researcher at the Assistant Librarians' Conference on Gaelic books, (Mitchell Library, Glasgow, 27.4.89), by a representative from the National Library of Wales. Here one newly-rebuilt Welsh-medium school is, it seems, already proving inadequate to cope with pupil-demand, and parents have applied to Dyfed County Council for free transportation to enable their children to attend another, more distant (Welsh-medium) school - thus far in vain. Meanwhile immigrant English parents in the neighbouring county of Powys, feeling that their own local catchment school was too heavily *Welsh*-flavoured, applied for transfer of their children to an *English*-medium school in Aberystwyth. Dyfed County Council agreed forthwith to provide free transport to bring the Powys pupils from the county boundary to Aberystwyth.

2.10 However, as Morgan (op cit: 251) points out, positive and far-reaching practical steps are now being taken by the education authorities to address the problem of language maintenance within heartland areas "instead of leaving the schools.....to cope", as discussed in what follows, and illustrated in descriptions of school observation in Gwynedd (4.1 ff, below), though "whether the policy is too little and too late is open to question" (Morgan, op cit: 251).

### 3 Primary education in Wales

3.1 According to Government statistics 15.3% of primary school children in Wales are fluent in Welsh - and only half of these are first language native speakers (Morgan, op cit: 250).

3.2 Primary school language policies vary from county to county (ibid): "from the enthusiastic Gwynedd County Council policy commitment to bilingual education for all at one extreme to the apparent indifference of anglicised Gwent at the other extreme" (ibid) though Morgan points out that even Gwent has been showing more commitment of late - having recently hosted the National Eisteddfod (County Councils Gazette, 1988: 162) and established its first autonomous bilingual primary school (Morgan, op cit: 250); also as indicated by the supportive remarks of its (Scottish-born) Director of Education, cf 2.2, above.

3.3 Teacher supply There is a nationwide shortage of teachers qualified to teach through the medium of Welsh, especially in certain secondary specialisms (though this is less acute at the primary stage in general and in Gwynedd in particular, as discussed, 4.3, below). Head teachers, faced with the inability to draw up satisfactory short-lists have in some instances been reduced to "poaching" from other Regions - and the situation has even caused the abandonment of Welsh-medium provision in some curricular areas in some schools (source: unpublished study document, n.d., supplied by Ystalyfera Secondary School, West Glamorgan).

3.4 Resource development At national level, teaching materials are produced with Government funding through cooperation between the inter-authority Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC) and the University

Department of Education at Aberystwyth. Although Welsh-medium teaching materials far exceed those available in Scottish Gaelic, they are seen as far from adequate, as shown by a speech delivered by the Director of the Welsh Language Education Development Committee (WLEDC) (Conference Report: St David's Forum, Gwbert, 20.11.87). Administered by a professional directorate, the WLEDC operates as an independent committee of the WJEC, comprising officers and member representatives from all eight of the Welsh county councils, and representatives from the Inspectorate and other interested bodies. Set up in 1987, its remit is to deal with the wider aspects of language planning, with sub-committees delegated to deal with specific areas of Welsh education (Nursery and Primary; Secondary and Tertiary; Research and Publicity). The Director defined the remit of the WLEDC "as mainly that of ensuring an adequate provision of Welsh medium teaching materials to form a broad, balanced and relevant education", pointing to improvements during the 1980's in terms of Welsh Office funding, while suggesting that, in the past, the need for teachers to produce their own resources "may have been a factor in the effectiveness of many aspects of Welsh-medium education". However, he continued:

3.4.1 "No one involved in Welsh language education would expect the same supply of materials that are so readily available in English in every area of school experience. But Welsh medium resources are poorly supplied, by whatever criterion one cares to use....In fact one of the main terms of reference (of the WLEDC) was to find out the needs and make a list of priorities".



3.5 Bilingual primary education models Morgan (op cit: 250) lists four models (more than one of which may operate simultaneously in some schools):

3.5.1 Welsh the sole or principal medium of instruction: 18.8% of all primary schools (a)

3.5.2 partial Welsh-medium instruction, mixed classes, L1 and L2 pupils: 9.2% (b)

3.5.3 partial Welsh-medium instruction, L2 pupils: 4.7% (c)

3.5.4 Welsh as second language subject: 44.2% (d)

3.5.5 (Welsh not taught: 23%)

3.6 I observed some of these in operation, as follows:

3.6.1 Gwynedd: (a): "natural" rural primary, "designated" Welsh-medium primary, "immersion" - infant and primary; (a) + \*(b): urban "bilingual" primary \*policy = (a) only in future years

3.6.2 West Glamorgan: (a): "designated" Welsh-medium - primary and secondary (urban); "immersion" - infant and primary

3.6.3 South Glamorgan: (a): "designated" Welsh-medium primary; (c): Welsh Primary Unit

#### 4. Gwynedd

##### 4.1 This county includes

4.1.1 (a) tiny rural communities with two- or three-teacher schools and a fairly solidly-based "traditional" Welsh population;

(b) county towns like Bangor and Caernarfon, situated within predominantly Welsh-speaking areas; and

(c) Holyhead, a large anglicised conurbation on the island of Anglesey, accessible by bridge to the mainland on one side and, as one of Wales' busiest sea-ports, to all points west on the other.

4.2 Gwynedd, like all of Wales, is undergoing an ever-increasing influx of English people who sell properties in the bordering counties and either commute to work or settle down to live off their investments. Despite this (perhaps, some might say, *because* of it) the county now operates an across-the-board **Primary School Bilingual Policy**. All pupils are immersed in Welsh at the infant stage; English teaching is introduced at the junior stage. In terms of the models already given (3.5., above) the county aims towards providing education in which Welsh is the principal medium of instruction (a) for all primary and an increasing number of secondary pupils. In some schools "partial Welsh-medium provision to mixed classes" (b) and "partial Welsh-medium instruction to L2 pupils" (c) pertains at the junior stages, among pupils who entered school prior to implementation of the present policy (cf 3.6.1 above, and 4.8.5 below)

4.3 All primary teachers must be fluent Welsh speakers (the only exception is in Roman Catholic schools, where suitably-qualified Welsh-speakers are hard to identify - the Welsh tradition is firmly rooted in Methodism). A growing proportion of staff are fluent Welsh L2 learners. Gwynedd is comparatively well-supplied for teachers: a far higher proportion of school-leavers enter the teaching profession in Gwynedd than in any other part of Wales (study document, n.d. op cit), and a noticeably high proportion at primary level are men. This healthy situation must be at least in part attributable to the accessibility of Bangor Normal College, a major source of Welsh-trained teaching-staff, local resource development, INSET, Welsh as a Second Language courses etc, situated in the very heart of the county.

4.4 Welsh-medium teaching is carried out across the curriculum, throughout the primary system, in every school. The stated aim is to enable all children to operate efficiently in both languages by the end of the primary stage, and to be sufficiently confident to participate in Welsh-medium secondary education if they so desire. All immigrants must take these policies into consideration before deciding to relocate.

4.5 The steady influx of incomers at all times of the year and at all stages of the Primary puts a very real strain on the bilingual system. Class sizes are "normal" - with such a huge investment in Bilingual teaching, and the concomitant need for resource development, the Authority cannot afford to adjust the teacher-pupil ratio to accommodate late-starters or other disparities. However teachers are supported through other mechanisms:

4.5.1 a. Language Reception Centres

b. Athrawon Bro

c. the Advisory Service

4.6 Of these the latter needs no explanation other than to point out that all advisory staff are Welsh-speaking, enthusiastic advocates of bilingualism. The inclusion of Welsh in the National Curriculum, which may severely pressurise resources and man-power in other counties, will make no tangible difference in Gwynedd other than to endorse established practices.

#### 4.7 Language Reception Centres

4.7.1 These are provided for late-comers in the 7+ age-group. (Below this age immigrant children are immersed in Welsh alongside their class-mates). They are attended, usually, for ten-week courses, after which the children are re-admitted into the mainstream school, often, apparently, possessing linguistic skills in advance of their class-mates. I visited one such centre (Llangybi) where a composite class of seventeen English-born children had been learning together full-time for seven weeks and appeared in that time to have become relaxed and fluent in Welsh, at least within the linguistic contexts of general school and social usage.

4.7.2 Llangybi Welsh Unit is housed in a terrapin outside one of the "natural Welsh" (rural) primaries where 80% of children are assessed as being fluent native speakers, and where the Headteacher proudly introduced to me to a row of children - all members of a large Welsh-speaking family who live in a house with no television: "we need more like these in Llangybi", she said. "Unfortunately our Methodist tradition isn't conducive of large families! The Irish are better organised than us!"

4.7.3 The children in the Reception Unit integrate with those in the main school at lunch and play-times. Two teachers are in charge of the Unit, and though there are specifically language-orientated projects (e.g. an imaginary village peopled with typical worthies who indulge in some decidedly atypical pastimes devised by the children

themselves) it is emphasised to parents that teaching is generally effected through the continuance, rather than at the expense of normal schooling across the curriculum.

4.7.4 The teachers here are patently expert in communicative language teaching, and have built up a trusting relationship brimming with humour and badinage which enables the children to express themselves freely, unselfconsciously and imaginatively. Staff felt that the novelty and short-term nature of the these courses, in addition to the staff-pupil ratio, allows them to be more than normally "extravert" and casual in their dealings with the children. The children were on first name terms with both teachers.

#### 4.8 Athrawon Bro

4.8.1 These are peripatetic ("community") language teachers, whose function until recently was to provide short once-a-week Welsh lessons - as with Gaelic in parts of Strathclyde and Highland Regions. However it was felt in Gwynedd that this practice was counter-productive, compartmentalising or marginalising Welsh as a subject rather than a viable teaching-medium, and even sometimes undermining the class-teacher's own confidence or motivation to use Welsh at other times. And so the function of the Athrawon Bro has been altered radically.

4.8.2 They now work in teams, moving together into a school or schools on an extended basis - a term or more - to team-teach alongside every in-service staff-member. Though still known by the

children as "the Welsh ladies" their impact is now more far-reaching, and enhances both the pedagogic and the linguistic practice in the schools (if these can indeed be separated).

4.8.3 I saw the Athrawon Bro in action in a school in Holyhead - Ysgol Gynradd Llaingoch - a primary with a roll of almost 200, large classes, and a negligible number of "native" Welsh-speakers. Seven Athrawon were working alongside the class teachers five mornings a week for two terms.

4.8.4 The Athrawon themselves suggest cross-curricular topics, in consultation with the Headteacher, stimulating and inspiring the class-teacher to add his/her own input and continue the work in the same or related areas. Some teachers were initially resistant to the idea of such an "invasion" of their domain, but soon came to recognise the usefulness of the scheme, especially in dealing with learning difficulties of all kinds, including linguistic.

4.8.5 That a serious reappraisal of former practices had been timely was indicated by a teacher of thirty-one Primary 6 children, who estimated that by this stage in their education only about a third of her class had in fact attained sufficient Welsh to contemplate the commencement of Welsh-medium secondary education in a year's time. This she attributed to their not having commenced "proper bilingual education" early enough: although all staff were Welsh-speaking their implementation of the bilingual policy had in reality varied widely in the past, according to their interest, self-confidence and commitment.

The policy is now clearly stated, and the Athrawon Bro contribute enormously to its success in the class-room.

4.8.6 I also visited a school in a socially deprived district of Holyhead (Ysgol Gynradd Llanfawr) where the Athrawon had recently been in situ. In this school crime, vandalism, truancy etc had constituted a major problem, but with the help of the Athrawon Bro the Headteacher had built up a new and lasting morale among both staff and pupils. Although only 5 children from the entire school roll (200+) were considered to have had any Welsh on entry to the primary, the language is now flourishing as a medium of education across the entire curriculum. Staff feel more hopeful that in future parents in this area may feel motivated to opt for Welsh-medium secondary education, despite almost total disinterest in the past: the Headteacher feels very strongly that the ground gained in the primary school will be of little avail if the language continues to "go back to square one" on entry to the secondary school. However there are obvious difficulties in an area where parental interest in and support of children's education is minimal in any event, or in either language.

4.8.7 The Athrawon Bro also help to staff residential centres, open throughout the year, to which teachers accompany their classes for a week's leisure activities through Welsh. The primary 7 class of the last-described school was on such a course when I visited the school. These are felt to be vital in terms of staff-pupil relations, and in establishing Welsh across non-scholastic areas of the children's experience.



4.8.8 Perhaps surprisingly the Athrawon Bro do not automatically enjoy financial weighting, despite the vital function they perform and the wealth of expertise and enthusiasm they evidently bring to their work. However there are some promoted "district" teacher posts - Athrawon delegated to lead small regional groups of specialists - and several Headteachers transpired to have been formerly Athrawon Bro, indicating, perhaps, some promotional advantages within the mainstream system.

#### 4.9 Designated Welsh-medium primary schools

4.9.1 Historically, Gwynedd has a legacy of a few such schools (in Llandudno, Holyhead, and Bangor). Putting no overt pressure on these schools to become absorbed within the system (though not appearing to give them much support either, apart from transportation of 4.9.5, below) the Authority hopes in the long term that they will be rendered redundant (or indistinguishable) through the success of the regional bilingual policy. As one teacher commented:

4.9.2 "The future of Welsh lies in making the Bilingual Policy work right across the board. Leaving it in the hands of a minority of parents sufficiently motivated to demand designated Welsh schools will not stem the tide of anglicisation across the county".

4.9.3 According to the official policy, ensuring that every child (of whatever background) is immersed in Welsh using existent staff frees

the Authority to channel its resources into creating adequate support mechanisms and resources to service the existent pool of bilingual teachers rather than into the creation of funding for separate designated schools or units. A visit to a school of this type was not on the menu prepared for me by the Advisory Service, but I orchestrated an unofficial visit (4.9.4, below), with the assistance of the Headteacher of another school.

4.9.4 Not surprisingly the Head of Ysgol Gynradd Morswyn, the designated Welsh-medium primary in Holyhead (roll 80+), feels there is still a very real need for this type of provision and for the more highly motivated, politicised type of parental support it attracts. Free transport is provided by the local education authority for those living outwith the catchment area (i.e. the majority).

4.9.5 Almost 100% of these children proceed to Welsh-medium secondary school, and this was the only school I visited where the children were speaking Welsh to one another by choice, and appeared interested in hearing (and trying out) another Celtic language. The school's success in terms of Welsh usage is perhaps not surprising, considering the higher level of parental commitment (often correlating with social status) and of native language ability entering the school.

4.9.6 The school receives no help in terms of Athrawon Bro, reception class placement etc: late-comers are simply immersed in Welsh from the moment they arrive. The Head says he is happy to enrol non-Welsh speaking children at any stage, though he is less than enthusiastic

about those whom he suspects may be applying for "the wrong reasons" (low school roll, exclusivity etc).

4.9.7 This visit was arranged at the last minute, and took place at the end of the school day, so it was impossible to assess the prevailing methodology. But teachers complained of lack of resources to sustain their Welsh-medium teaching - the P7 teacher was reading a story to her class, using a book from a Welsh learners' reading-scheme - and the displays of work and general aesthetic ambience of the school gave the impression of a rather less exciting ("progressive") environment than other schools visited in Holyhead. However, in fairness, these latter were picked by the Advisers as being examples of best practice, and may well have been less than representative.

4.9.8 It is not difficult, nonetheless, to understand why some parents still favour the designated Welsh-medium school, especially in anglophone Holyhead, where all mainstream staff complained that Reception Class places were inadequate to meet the ever-increasing need.

4.9.9 (N.B. Even where reception places are available there may be pitfalls: one Holyhead Headteacher described how he had refused to send an English boy on a Reception course until he mended his disruptive behaviour. One could well imagine the influence this undisciplined monolingual boy must have had, in the meantime, upon a large Welsh-medium class containing a wide range of educational and linguistic abilities.)

**4.10 Language policy** In Gwynedd "good language teaching" is officially defined in terms of sustained input through stimulating classroom activities: cross-curricular thematic topics, computing, "reading for interest and meaning" - these have replaced the structural language syllabi and drilling by which Welsh was transmitted in the past, and a rich variety of interesting and relevant contexts has replaced the artificial context of language-as-a-subject. However, a very high level of *language awareness* is demonstrated by teachers in their interchanges with pupils. It may be useful to describe in some detail a P.E. lesson with a large class of 4 - 5 year olds in a nursery class in Holyhead, and attempt to convey some of the highly-successful strategies employed by their energetic middle-aged teacher to utilise this routine and regular lesson in order to maximise linguistic input and usage.

**4.10.1** The P.E. class took place in the hall of Ysgol Babanod Coed Mawr (roll 65+) - a three-teacher Infant/Nursery Unit for 4 - 7 year olds, housed within a modern building also containing a Special Assessment Unit and a voluntary Welsh play-group. In addition to providing a constant stream of verbal input the teacher also contrived to check (and praise) comprehension constantly without putting children under stress to produce language - yet she also created opportunities for the more linguistically confident children to use what Welsh they knew, in itself a useful source of input for the rest.

**4.10.2** Each stage of the lesson (from changing into sports gear in the class-room through whole-class warm-up activities to group and individual work in the hall) was controlled and reinforced by positive

verbal encouragement and description. The teacher's sentences were instinctively repetitive, with cumulative small-scale variations which made their meaning (and much of their vocabulary and grammar) accessible even to this non-Welsh speaker. She flew around the hall, participating, encouraging - above all talking, yet never losing the impetus of the lesson:

4.10.3 "Ooooh! Mary has made herself big! She's very big! And James is big too! Can you be bigger yet, James? Just look how big Gwen is! Can anyone else be as big as Gwen? Or even bigger? Oh David, you're not big at all. That's it! Good boy! Now you're getting bigger! Bigger still please. Oooh good boy! What a big boy. And there's a great big girl! Catherine is such a big girl. Use both arms James - left, right, is that your left arm? No good boy the other arm! Right, left! Bigger, bigger, both arms....."

4.10.4 After the warm-up the infants divided into groups to set out the P.E. equipment. With the rest as audience each group in turn wrestled with large-scale, often potentially dangerous apparatus - an exercise during which the teacher, (despite temptation to the contrary), persisted in her use of verbal instruction and encouragement rather than physical demonstration or intervention.

4.10.5 "The blue box - is that the blue box, Gwen? No that's the yellow box. There - good girl, that's the blue box now. It's bigger than the yellow box isn't it - the yellow box wouldn't fit there would

it? Now lift - help her, David, help Gwen to lift the blue box. Mind your toes, Gwen, don't drop it! Don't drop the blue box..."

4.10.6 This was a lengthy process, but our attention never flagged for a moment as she dramatised each stage of the exercise into almost Herculean proportions with a racy running commentary:

4.10.6 "Now just look at Gwen carrying the big blue box. What a heavy big blue box. Will Gwen manage to carry it across the hall? Will she carry the big, blue, heavy box without dropping it on her toes? Oooh! I hope she won't drop the box on her toes. Will she drop the box? Will Gwen drop the heavy box? What do you think, children? Will Gwen drop the big blue heavy box? No she won't! Oooh! yes she will! Oh no she won't! Oh yes she will! No - yes - no! Hurray! Three cheers for Gwen! What a clever girl to carry such a very big blue heavy box...the biggest, heaviest box of all....."

4.10.7 In all this, as she (quite unnecessarily) explained later, she is consciously encouraging physical and verbal self-reliance as part of the same process, though the text-books would call her methods a perfect example of "Total Physical Response" techniques (McLaughlin, 68 - 69). The children's involvement in the lesson, their unconscious osmotic intake of language (not to mention the way in which they rose to some physically dangerous challenges) more than compensated for the accelerated pulse-rate of their less adventurous Scottish visitor.

4.10.8 The lesson was rendered doubly interesting (and poignant) by the presence of a non-Welsh speaking deaf child, whose bilingual mother was present to help her participate by a mixture of sign-language and lip-reading. The teacher had serious qualms about the girl's future progress in the school, "unless the parents make a more conscious effort to use Welsh in the home".

4.11 Policy on the introduction of English reading I asked this teacher later about her timing of introduction of English reading. Being a complete individualist it is perhaps unsurprising that she has her own methods here also, and that they seem to work - despite being contrary to normal practice in L2 immersion classes. She believes that children are ready to read much earlier than is normally accepted (cf Smith, 1978) - and that they come to school having already wasted several years of potential literacy. In order to hold them back not another moment, therefore, she commences reading immediately in the child's First Language (i.e. usually English). She times the introduction of L2 reading according to individual progress in (a) mother-tongue literacy and (b) second language oracy. Using these methods she finds that most children are reading well in both languages by the end of their first year at school. However she is curious to know whether reversing the process would have any marked effect on progress and feels she may try this in future, "just out of interest".

4.12 (It should be noted that this class is blessed not only with an expert communicative language class-teacher, but also with a full-time nursery assistant, a privilege not enjoyed by all infant classes and jealously guarded by schools with such posts established before recent cutbacks.)

4.13 The rural Welsh heartland In sharp contrast to urban Holyhead I spent some time in a primary school (roll 200+) situated outside a small town (comparable in size to Portree) in a "natural" Welsh-speaking area (Ysgol Dolbadarn, Llanberis). In this school most children have at least one Welsh-speaking parent, though teachers complained that all-too-often the parents "talk to us in Welsh then turn and ask the children how they got on at school today - in English!"

4.14 Here, in recent years, a concerted effort has been made to improve the prevailing formal educational practice - transforming the run-down building into an inviting, stimulating environment; encouraging parental involvement (the school is situated on the side of a quarry some distance from the town-centre); transforming methodology, motivation and morale of existent staff. The linguistic profile has improved naturally in the process.

4.15 Gwynedd's stated philosophy of encouraging creative use of language (written as well as spoken) is typified in this school. Children at all stages of the primary produce ("*publish*") their own illustrated books, (at a steady rate of two per term), which are given equal status in the classroom with published material, available for all to read. The older children are learning to bind the books to near-professional standard, decorating the bindings with a variety of techniques, including screen-printing, word-processing and collage. Illustrations are similarly varied, from coloured drawings and magazine cut-outs to snap-shots and computer graphics.



4.16 None of the books contain any corrections (by the teacher or the pupil) - all these are confined to the child's "draft writing folder" - and the child does not add any entry to his book until he/she is completely satisfied with it. The drafting process not only ensures initial spontaneity of expression but also attention to final details - grammatical, secretarial and artistic. The entire process also encourages children to read - by maintaining a constant pool of interesting, personalised material in the class-room, and by "de-mystifying" professionally produced books.

4.17 In the early years the books are written entirely in Welsh. By the later stages of the primary they are bilingual "according to whichever language the child feels most appropriate" and the teacher's influence is exercised tactfully to ensure that both English and Welsh have been employed, in the course of each term, across the range of writing (functional, expressive etc). As regards content, one book per term reflects the prevailing class project, (usually with a language arts or environmental starting-point) while the second is designated "personal". In project work the children use English-medium reference material where none exists in Welsh - taking draft notes in Welsh. Projects are cross-curricular: the P7 class had been working on "Health", and had produced impressive wall-displays which reflected the environmental, mathematical, scientific, technological and expressive aspects of the topic. The school was about to embark upon a whole-school project on the quarry - with each class researching a different aspect. It is hoped that the exercise will virtually transform the school into a temporary local museum, encouraging the interest and support of the whole surrounding community.

**4.18 National identity** I happened to be in Gwynedd on St David's Day. It was interesting to see the extent to which all children were encouraged to identify with this festival, with schools running local Eisteddfodau (as heats for the county and national events), mounting celebratory assemblies with dramatised history, folk-dance and song, every school flying the Welsh flag, every infant class-room painting red and green dragons. Fostering a conscious sense of national, cultural and historical identity in this way is seen as an integral part of bilingual education.

**4.19 Primary school book scheme** This was the day, also, which was chosen for the nationwide public launch of a £90,000 scheme to produce 100 original Welsh books for children. It had been felt by primary staff that one of the most pressing resource development "priorities" (3.4.1 above) was to provide a wide range of Welsh-medium reading material for the lower stages of the primary school. There seem to be two reasons for this:

**4.19.1 methodology:** as part of the drive to improve language teaching generally, steering practitioners away from "traditional" structuralist methods towards a more "natural" communicative approach based on L1 cognitive acquisition theories, reading has become identified as an important source of linguistic input (Krashen and Terrell, op cit). This has in turn revolutionised the Welsh-medium educationist's approach to the teaching of infant reading, leading to the wide-spread rejection of instrumental or interventionist instruction (graded reading schemes, "look and say", phonic schemes and so on) and the substitution of a more "natural" approach here

also. The prolific Canadian educationist Professor Frank Smith has become widely accepted as the "guru" of the progressive Welsh-medium approach to infant reading, much as many progressive Modern Language teachers are devotees of Krashen (op cit). Smith seems well on the way to becoming the "Dr. Spock" of the Welsh-medium infant classroom, as witnessed by the Holyhead Nursery Unit teacher whose emphasis on "getting children reading straight away" has already been discussed, 4.11, above:

4.19.2 *"children cannot be taught to read.* A teacher's responsibility is not to teach children to read but to make it possible for them to learn to read....the real skills of reading, that have made readers out of you and me, are not skills that are formally taught at school or ever could be. We have acquired these skills only through the practice of reading" (Smith, op cit: 5).

4.19.3 It follows, therefore, that there is a pressing need for "the availability of interesting material that makes sense to the learner" (ibid).

4.19.4 Content: it follows also that such material must be relevant to the child's own experience and reflect his/her cultural background; must provide a well-illustrated "meaningful context" from which the child can predict the meaning of printed words and extrapolate the rules of reading for themselves. To date most available Welsh infant reading material, it was argued, was based on translations from other languages - optimally produced, for economic reasons, as parallel

print-runs; most typically hand-produced as "paste-overs". Many of these could not be said to provide the "relevant", culturally appropriate type of material necessary to gain and retain the child's interest....

4.19.5 Whatever view one may take of the wholesale rejection of long-accepted methodology (after all, Dr Spock lived to repent in middle-age some of his own more radical liberal ideologies) there can be little doubt that the Welsh-medium educationists deserve their £90,000, highly illustrated, specially-commissioned infant reading *corpus*, for the unswerving skill with which they have based their arguments on progressive educational practice.

4.20 **Publicity** The publicity launch referred to above (4.19.1) was skilfully handled on a nationwide level; simultaneous press receptions were held, in educational centres throughout Wales. I attended the launch in Bangor Normal College - which took the form of a buffet lunch, followed by a demonstration language lesson using the new books to stimulate discussion among a specially imported local primary class. Representatives of the Welsh Office, local government and the press were entertained, alongside members of language promotion organisations and practising teachers. It seemed a well-orchestrated exercise, designed to gain maximum publicity and goodwill, and St David's Day provides a useful focus for such public relations exercises.

4.21 **Teacher training** It was useful to have the opportunity of visiting Bangor Normal College and meeting staff. This is an important source of

Welsh-medium teachers, not only for Gwynedd but for the whole of Wales. On the one hand there is an accolade in having been trained "in the heartland", and on the other the existence of this facility seems to have been instrumental in retaining young Welsh-speaking people in the area and directing their attention towards teaching as a profession (there is, as already remarked, 3.3 and 4.3, above, no shortage of Welsh-speaking primary teachers in Gwynedd, and a notable proportion of these is male). The College is also useful in terms of cooperation with practising teachers in the county over local resource development, INSET, short courses, school experience etc. As regards training methods for bilingual teachers, these are described by staff as "emphasising good educational practice, but doing it all through Welsh".

4.22 From the College's point of view the advantages have been equally great. A small F.E. College in a rural area would, it is felt, have had little chance of survival "on its own merits". There are almost a hundred students in the Department of Education, and this has preserved a signal *raison d'être* for the institution: "without the Welsh teacher training element they'd have closed us down long ago" was the prevailing opinion. This may seem of relevance to Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (the Gaelic College in Skye: Fraser, 1989, and abridged Report, 3.4, above)

## 5. West Glamorgan

5.1 West Glamorgan, although it includes "natural" Welsh pockets - in the Valleys - has a far less overtly "Welsh" ethos than Gwynedd, and Welsh-medium education is offered as an *option* rather than as an across-the-board bilingual policy. Thus, while Gwynedd has a stated language policy (Gwynedd County Council, n.d.) West Glamorgan's *Policy Statement for the Curriculum* is written entirely in English and Welsh, *per se* is not mentioned. This however belies a situation in which designated Welsh-medium primary education is available to families who desire it, with free transport provided to those living outwith the natural school catchment. Their pupils come overwhelmingly from non-Welsh speaking, professional backgrounds: the benefits of bilingualism are well-recognised, and Welsh-medium education has become a status symbol in some areas.

5.2 **In-service training** Regular INSET is offered across a wide variety of skills in this county, and its results are especially evident as regards the aesthetic ambience of the 12 schools visited by different groups of the Gwynedd party. Parents are "trained" in turn by teachers, and take an active part in achieving sometimes quite startlingly artistic displays and heightening the children's aesthetic awareness of their own environment and pride in their own achievements. Perversely, I and my companions began to long for a little more spontaneity, a little more evidence of the children's own hand in mounting their work. I visited one Swansea primary school and its related nursery Unit; one secondary school and a primary language reception centre housed within it.

### 5.3 Ysgol Gymraeg Castell Nedd

5.3.1 Background The roll of this school is 230, in addition to a nursery unit of sixty children). Neath is a crowded suburb of Swansea. The Headteacher explains to prospective parents that Welsh is the principal medium of education at all levels of the school, and bilingualism the *raison d'être*. She requires them to support their choice actively, both by accepting without question the school's linguistic policy and by supplementing their children's Welsh experience extra-murally - by encouraging membership of Urdd (Welsh youth clubs), seeking out Welsh speakers to add linguistic input and, if necessary, help with homework, and themselves to take part in *adult immersion classes*. Interestingly, many city parents, here and in Cardiff, attend such classes for an hour each morning, on their way to work, school-delivery etc.

5.3.2 For her own part, the Headteacher undertakes to monitor the children's development carefully: if she feels a child is under-achieving she will interview parents to establish whether they themselves feel this is language-related, and whether they wish to remove the child to an English-medium school (in practice a very rare outcome). However my companions from Gwynedd were highly critical of this strategy, considering it to perpetuate what they describe as the "myth" that L2 acquisition constitutes a significant added burden to children. They felt that a more appropriate approach to "under-achievement" would be the re-examination of the entire learning context rather than holding up abandonment of the exercise as a

damocletian alternative. It should be recalled, however, that their situation, in an officially designated bilingual county, may not take full account of all the pressures which may pertain in a large city like Swansea, dealing with the expectations of generally more ambitious parents.

5.3.3 (It may also be of interest that individual teachers in every area visited - including Gwynedd - opined that children's success in language acquisition seems to coincide with general all-round ability. This is of course a subjective observation which, even if empirically validated, can be interpreted at will either to support or to undermine confidence in L2-medium programmes. Indeed, I heard both shades of interpretation from practitioners during my stay in Wales: (a) "I worry about \_\_\_\_\_ - she'd be struggling anyway, even without the linguistic element" and (b) "\_\_\_\_\_ isn't terribly bright, but she wouldn't be doing any better in an English-medium situation - indeed we give her something extra she wouldn't get in an English school". Much seems dependent on staff attitudes and ability, class size, extent and nature of support mechanisms etc, as in any educational context).

5.3.4 Children are introduced to Welsh in a separate Nursery Reception class, attended by 4 - 5 year olds on a half-time basis and staffed by two full-time members (a teacher and a nursery nurse). This is Authority-funded: as education for this age-group is not statutory, education authorities can choose to teach through the medium of "any



language they like": this has provided Welsh-orientated authorities with a strategic means of providing a measure of bilingualism to many children whose parents might otherwise have remained uninterested. Many "converts" have been gained in this fashion, who opt to continue the process into the Welsh-medium primary school and beyond.

#### 5.4 Linguistic policy

5.4.1 In the junior section of the primary school the curriculum is Welsh-medium with the exception of mathematics practice-work, where English printed resources (SPMG) are used - despite the availability of Welsh translations. This is attributed by the Headteacher to "the lack of Welsh-speaking maths teachers in the secondary school. Again, this strategy was subsequently criticised by the Gwynedd party, who believe mathematical understanding to be transferable and who see mathematical problem-solving as an easily-assimilated source of language input.

5.4.2 Great emphasis is put on the use of the surrounding environment as a source both of knowledge and of linguistic input in the junior immersion classes: one class of 8 - 9 year olds had constructed a live wormery; were scientifically observing the worms; had brought worm-like *objets trouvés* into the classroom and used them as stimuli for creative and factual writing, craft and design, and mathematics (measurement, tessellation etc).

5.4.3 In the upper primary the two languages are used separately, in parallel fashion: each year one termly project is undertaken entirely through English, two through Welsh. Teachers felt that this allowed them to concentrate their attention on each language in turn and to minimise language interference. However the policy would seem to need careful handling in order to avoid (a) loss of impetus in Welsh for prolonged periods of time and (b) subconscious association of one language with certain areas of life or study.

5.4.4 Asked if children speak together in Welsh the Headteacher replied "yes - but sometimes we have to insist".

## 5.5 Welsh Teachers' Association

5.5.1 The Headteacher of this school informed me that the desire has arisen among staff throughout the country for the formation of an *Association of Teachers of Welsh* (as an equivalent to NATE - the National Association for Teachers of English). This, she feels, would be especially valuable for the spread of information in such areas as primary-secondary liaison, INSET, resource development, etc. (A similar Association has been mooted in Scotland among teachers of Gaelic, and a letter circulated by Jordanhill College of Education to all involved practitioners).

## 5.6 Welsh-medium secondary education

5.6.1 Ysgol Gyfin Ystalyfera is the related Welsh-medium secondary (comprehensive) school to which the majority of children from Castell Nedd transfer. Situated in Ystalyfera, a community to the north of Swansea, the school was opened in 1969, then the only school of its kind in West Glamorgan. There is now another school serving the south of the county.

5.6.2 It serves a wide catchment, which includes four designated Welsh primary schools in addition to the "traditional" Welsh primaries situated in the north of the Valleys, though here the proportion of Welsh speaking children (and adults) is declining sharply. Two-thirds of all pupils now come from anglophone homes and of the remainder the Headteacher says "their parents are negligent in speaking Welsh with their children". Though many pupils speak Welsh habitually among themselves, he feels the situation "leaves much to be desired" - the ever-increasing influx of English immigrants to the area constitutes a major problem for the maintenance of the indigenous culture.

5.6.3 The school roll is 700+, with a Sixth Form of 167. It also houses a Reception Unit for primary school children aged 7+.

5.6.4 The majority of subjects are taught through the medium of Welsh, exceptions being Mathematics and Science (cf 5.4.1, above) due to the lack of specialist teachers, though pupils can (and many do) opt to sit Welsh-medium examinations in these subjects. Although all teaching and auxiliary

staff are bilingual, "some are more Welsh-speaking than others" It is hoped that this situation will improve as the present generation of pupils emerges into the work-force, although the teaching profession here has to vie with the media and the arts a substantial proportion of pupils each year progresses into S4C - as actors, presenters, production staff, etc

5.6.5 As regards discrete language teaching, French, German, Swedish and Latin are offered, in addition to English and Welsh All pupils learn at least one, sometimes two European languages (usually French and German) to the end of the third year of the secondary There is an acute teacher shortage in this area also This year only one PGCE student is undertaking the Welsh-medium Modern Language course in Aberystwyth

5.6.6 As already indicated, (3.4, above), Welsh-medium resources emanate from two principal sources University College Aberystwyth and the Government-funded WJEC - which also acts as an examining body committed to produce examinations in Welsh as demand arises As regards curricular content, subjects such as History and Geography appear to be less anglocentric than their Scottish counterparts - even when taught through the medium of English the Headteacher believes Welsh-medium teaching and assessment to have influenced this

5.6.7 There is a very high success rate in examinations. an 81 - 82% A-level pass-rate in 1988 was "a disappointing year" (compare national average 74%). 50% of fifth year pupils achieve success in at least five O-level subjects (at bands A, B, or C) and only 2% of pupils on average leave

school with no formal qualifications. The Headteacher admits that the intake is "not completely balanced" - there are no entrance tests or bars, and every socio-economic class is represented within the school, but parental commitment at primary level has skewed the ability range towards the upper end of the scale. On the other hand the exercise of parental choice has also given the school a proportion of pupils whose parents are concerned with "image" rather than committed to the Welsh language as such.

**5.6.8 Primary-secondary liaison** This is one of the main preoccupations of the Assistant Head in charge of the Lower School. Each year a comprehensive programme of "missionary work" is undertaken, preaching the advantages of bilingualism to parents of children in the third and fourth grades of the primary school. It has proved more difficult to make these connections with the "traditional" Welsh schools than with designated Welsh-medium primaries, but the younger primary Headteachers appear to be more receptive to current philosophy and more welcoming of advances from the secondary.

**5.6.9 Primary-secondary transition** New pupils are integrated into the secondary by means of a carefully constructed programme which commences with the attendance, by all S1 pupils, of a three-day Welsh-medium activity camp in Dyfed, accompanied by ten members of staff and a dozen sixth-formers. This is followed up by a weekly lunch-time "reunion" with the sixth-formers, who also organise the First Year Christmas party and write and perform a pantomime. In the second term the sixth-formers coach the younger pupils for the Eisteddfod, and by the third term the first-year pupils are themselves ready to take part in the transition programme for the next intake, accompanying prospective pupils on a day's introductory

exploration of the school. This centres around a specially written computer programme introducing pupils to the layout of the school - an electronic treasure-hunt to find each department, where "hands-on" activities have been prepared.

5.6.10 Pupils are very actively involved in extra-curricular cultural activities: Welsh chors, drama groups, the Eisteddfod and Urdd (national youth club network).

5.6.11 **Primary Reception Unit** Twelve English children (aged 7 - 11) currently attend this Unit in circumstances akin to those described for Gwynedd (4.7.1, above) though here the teacher's efforts are not facilitated by the fact that he is operating on his own within a secondary ambience. The potential of such Units is greatly enhanced by the presence of more than one member of staff - both for team-teaching and individual attention, and to allay feelings of isolation in the teacher.

## 6 South Glamorgan

6.1 Language policy South Glamorgan County Council education provision includes 10 designated Welsh-medium primary schools, and one Welsh Secondary school. In Cardiff there are five Welsh-medium primary schools and six Bilingual Units within larger schools. Of these eleven, by far the majority have been established in the north-west of the city (the "gin-and-tonic" belt, as one unabashed Headteacher put it. A high proportion of parents are professional, many of them connected with the media.)

6.2 My first visit in Cardiff was to Ysgol y Wern, a Welsh-medium primary which began its life in 1981 with about a hundred pupils, 75% of whom came from Welsh-speaking homes. The school now has over 200 pupils, but only 45% have Welsh backgrounds, though there is a most committed Parents' Association whose Welsh-speaking members give a great deal of support and assistance to the school. According to the Welsh-speaking Headteacher most children at this school speak Welsh voluntarily to one another, at play etc: she attributes this to the relatively high proportion of native Welsh-speaking children in the original intake, which established a linguistic pattern which it has been fairly easy to maintain. By far the majority of pupils progress to Welsh-medium secondary education.

6.3 As in Ysgol Gymraeg Castell Nedd (the Swansea primary described 5.3.1, above), the Headteacher feels she has a duty to non-Welsh speaking parents ("who can't monitor their children's progress to the

same extent") to inform them if she feels the language may be causing learning problems. She would not take this course of action, however, if she felt these problems arose from "general all-round lack of ability". (The Gwynedd teachers' response to similar policies in Swansea pertain here also).

**6.4 Language teaching policy** Contrary to current linguistic theory (and to the prevailing philosophy in both Gwynedd and Swansea), an essentially structured (grammatical) syllabus underlies teaching in both Welsh-medium primaries I visited in Cardiff. The respective Headteachers believe that if such an approach is presented in "a stimulating way", based on children's social needs and general school-work, it can be achieved without their being aware of the process. However it was a little daunting to see a class of thirty 4 - 5 year-olds squeezed into a corner of the room for a fairly lengthy and repetitive question-answer session (i.e. thinly-disguised language-drilling), as, apparently, happens regularly morning and afternoon from P1. Though pleasantly handled and made at least overtly relevant to the class topic, some children were obviously inhibited (habitually so, one would guess) while the more self-confident children vied for the lime-light as no doubt they always did. Working systematically through an invisible check-list of grammatical progressions would seem to arise from the staff's preconceptions rather than from the children's actual language needs, and the class might have gained more from a general discussion in which individual children's actual interests and preoccupations were given equal status and attention.



6.6 The Headteacher of this school was personally involved in the translation of the SPMG (Scottish Primary Maths Group) Scheme into Welsh. Though her school still uses this scheme to some extent, mathematics is as far as possible integrated into cross-curricular activities, and this and other maths schemes (e.g. Nuffield) are used as back-up material. Maths, like all other subject areas, is taught through Welsh in this school.

#### 6.7 Welsh Bilingual Units

6.7.1 There are six Welsh Bilingual Units (or "streams") in S. Glamorgan, operating within larger host-schools, and dating from the 1960's. The Welsh Adviser in Cardiff seemed surprised that I was anxious to observe at least one such Unit: he advised that they are generally not considered to be a satisfactory alternative to Welsh-medium schools, for a variety of reasons, some of which may seem of relevance to the Scottish situation.

6.7.2 As part of the historical process the Units served their purpose: it is easier to persuade Education Committees to make bilingual provision if the financial implications can be defined in terms of small-scale development within existent buildings, with shared resources, services etc. However, designated Welsh primary schools are now considered to have such long-term advantages as fully to justify the greater capital expenditure involved, and the remaining Units are seen as compromise arrangements which will probably be entirely phased out in time.

6.7.3 The Welsh Adviser directed my attention to a recent HMI Report ("A survey of the Bilingual Provision for Pupils aged 4-11 in Six Schools in South Glamorgan" - Welsh Office, 1988). The original objectives of this type of provision "in areas where the use of Welsh had diminished" are described by HMI as:

6.7.4 "the formation of an educational programme which would gradually develop pupils' bilingualism by basing second language teaching on the experiences and activities of children in the infant department and extending it by the partial use of Welsh as a medium of teaching in the junior years" (ibid, 1)

6.7.5 The Report continues by describing the problems attendant upon such provision - especially lack of clarity as regards linguistic objectives and the extent of contact necessary to achieve these (ibid, 1 - 2); also uncertainty as to parental desires as regards the linguistic targets. This leads to wide discrepancies in the amount of exposure, and a noticeable lack of cohesion and coordination of effort (ibid, 1).

6.7.6 Further problems arise, the Report claims, from the desire of Headteachers to "ensure the unity of their schools, with the Bilingual streams as integral parts of them, and the same objectives and expectations of work for all classes in their schools" (ibid, 2). There is a need for "fuller bilingual schemes of work, delineating objectives in terms of skills, knowledge and understanding" (ibid, 2). The would-be integration of pupils into a whole-school atmosphere has

negative results in terms of the children's experience of language and the provision of a supportive educational environment for their learning - a lack of "Welsh ethos" in some Units (ibid, 2). The Report cites, as one example of this uneasy relationship, that not all schools make separate arrangements for Welsh-medium morning assemblies, and thus

6.7.7 "opportunities of developing their language skills are limited. The task of promoting pupils' bilingualism and that of fostering awareness of being members of one school community are not always successfully and appropriately balanced (ibid, 2)."

6.7.8 Similarly the information to parents (school hand-books etc) does not always do justice to the Welsh Bilingual Unit within the school. One hand-book is singled out as having made no reference to the provision whatsoever (ibid, 2 - 3).

6.7.9 Some schools had made a good attempt to mitigate the effects of these less than ideal circumstances. The report makes special mention of regular Welsh lessons for non-bilingual classes (and informal efforts on behalf of teachers of non-bilingual classes to learn and use Welsh wherever possible) as having enormous benefits for the morale of staff and pupils in the Bilingual Units (ibid, 2). On the other hand the staffing formula "includes no consideration of the added expectations and more complex organisational requirements of schools with bilingual provision" (ibid, 3).

6.7.10 In its closing comments the Report states:

6.7.11 "The potential is only partially realised. Only some pupils have developed a competence which, if reinforced by regular and additional support, would enable them to come to terms with a bilingual secondary education. At the same time a promising number of pupils in some classes have a sufficient grasp of the language to follow, in the secondary schools, a course which leads to an extended second language target. However, for a not insubstantial proportion, expectations are not high enough to enable pupils to achieve more than can be done in an English school where contact time with Welsh is limited but where the second language is taught effectively and purposefully" (ibid, 14 - 15).

6.7.12 I visited the Welsh Bilingual Unit in Ysgol Llanishen Fach, Cardiff, where many of these administrative, pedagogic and philosophical difficulties are well-illustrated.

6.7.13 The Welsh Unit is housed as follows: P's 1-3 are situated along a corridor side-by-side with their English counterparts - an arrangement justified by the monolingual Headteacher on grounds of the need to share resources. P's 4-7 have recently (and much to the satisfaction of the Welsh teachers) been transferred to a fairly autonomous wing of the school, clustered around a central hall which is now used for separate Welsh-medium assemblies, dinner-school, etc, for which occasions the P 1-3 infants join the older children.

6.7.14 There is pressure on the school to maintain roughly equal numbers of both staff and pupils in order to avoid complaints from parents or School Governors. The teachers in the Bilingual Unit feel that this policy boosts the numbers of pupils whose parents are not entirely committed to Welsh-medium teaching and puts them under pressure to "err on the side of English in the class. They don't mind too much what we do inside the Unit, as long as we're not seen to be teaching Welsh at the expense of English. If that happened they'd be in here like a shot".

6.7.15 Such pressure not unnaturally gives rise to confusion of aims, and linguistic expectations are clearly not high. Only one P7 pupil was contemplating attendance at a Bilingual Secondary school, and his decision seemed to be unusual cause for celebration among Welsh-speaking staff. I heard one of the infant teachers (an enthusiastic North Walian native-speaker) say to him (in English) "you'll have to try hard to speak some Welsh to your sister now, won't you".

6.7.16 A relatively high proportion of the teachers in this Unit are learners of Welsh. The P7 teacher said that she "would not feel confident enough to teach in a Welsh-medium school - this suits me fine". This was in marked contrast to the committed and self-confident Welsh-learners (some of English extraction) whom I had met in Welsh-medium teaching-situations in North Wales.

6.7.17 I lunched with a party of teachers from both sections of the school. On the whole the mainstream staff seemed vaguely supportive of the concept of Welsh-medium education, but one teacher in particular was politely but firmly unconvinced, and was positively hostile to the idea, recommended by the HMI Report, that all staff in such schools should make some effort to learn and use Welsh. If one may assume that this cohesive and friendly group, who choose regularly to lunch together outside the school, represents the more sympathetic end of opinion-spread in the school, it would seem to follow that shared staff-rooms may constitute another inhibiting factor - if only in terms of regular Welsh usage for everyday social contact and professional discussion - a particular disadvantage for learners engaged in Welsh-medium teaching.

6.7.18 Thus it appears that, in the very nature of Bilingual Units, there may be certain built-in disadvantages which require very careful and determined handling by a committed and sympathetic staff if the pupils' linguistic and cultural experience is not to be disastrously diluted, both inside the class-room and at "integrated" activity-time, play etc. These disadvantages have caused most Welsh Education Authorities to phase out Bilingual Units altogether, as a now redundant element in the evolution of Welsh-medium education, whether through across-the-board bilingual policies (as in Gwynedd) or Welsh-designated primary schools.

6.8 The last school I visited during my stay in Cardiff (Ysgol Melin Gruffydd) - a thriving Welsh-medium primary - was an antidote to any feelings of uncertainty lingering from the Bilingual Unit.

6.9 One of the native speaking teachers from the Bilingual Unit gave me a lift across the city, and it was instructive to see her relax and expand briefly in the company of the Welsh-medium HT: reminiscent of urban Gaelic-speakers, even where not acquainted, finding instant camaraderie in the whiff of a Gaelic accent - and creating their own linguistic oasis in an English desert.

#### 6.10 Ysgol Melin Gruffydd

6.10.1 This school was formed by the reorganisation of a large two-tier primary school with a falling roll. The former Infant and Junior buildings became the Welsh and English primaries respectively, with two Headteachers occupying adjacent offices in a shared administrative wing.

6.10.2 The "English" Head is himself Welsh-speaking, and the two colleagues share the best of relationships, cooperating wherever possible in the use of extraneous resources (coach-hire for school trips etc). However the aims and objectives of the Welsh school are clearly delineated and adhered to and the schools are quite autonomous as regards staffing, administration, requisitioning and per capita allowance, maintenance, assemblies and social events etc.

6.10.3 The schools have separate PTA's, and all correspondence to parents in the Welsh school is bilingual. The Welsh school has a lively calendar of cultural events, and while parents or pupils from the other school would not be discouraged from attending, it is well understood that no linguistic concessions will be made. Welsh adult classes are advertised prominently in the entrance to the school, and all signs inside and outside the school are in Welsh.

6.10.4 Although I did not visit the English-medium school there were indications around its periphery that considerable efforts were made to heighten children's awareness of the dual culture of Wales. Project work from the English school was on display in the common entrance hall and administrative wing - which joins the two schools like Siamese twins - and was thoroughly bilingual. This would seem model practice, and in line with the HMI recommendations cited above (6.7.3ff), and with the Government's recent policies on Welsh curricular development in all primary schools (2.1ff, above).

6.10.5 Such practice also seems of particular relevance to an area of Cardiff where the promotion of good *public relations* is essential. The relationship between the Welsh-medium school and the host community now seems excellent, but this was not always so. When the Welsh school was established the building was continually subjected to offensive graffiti of the "*Welshies go home*" variety, and the community was openly hostile. The two Headteachers cooperated from the outset to implement a conscious policy of spreading information among staff,



pupils and parents in the established school, and reached out to the community as they could. The Welsh-medium Head admits that he was fortunate in having a non-teaching post, and time to devote to the demanding but essential task of bridge-building.

6.10.6 Since then he has at all times gone out of his way to ensure that local people understand the nature of the Welsh-medium provision, and their entitlement to opt for it. In fact local demand has been minimal: most of the pupils are transported in from other areas. But sympathetic relationships have been forged and maintained.

6.10.7 I spent most of my visit in the Infant Department - a model environment of nooks and crannies full of interesting objects, books, and pictures, with all displays at child's eye-level - very little hung above the three-foot mark. Children were busy in all areas, moving freely, and quietly occupied on a variety of activities. The P1 house-corner merits description in its own right - a large corner of the room transformed into a miniature "cottage" with a roaring open fire, ornaments, pictures, curtained windows and scaled down furniture - all hand-made and brightly-painted with parental help. Although adult sentimentality may colour the response (it could have been a set from "Jackanory") it has no feeling of "do-not-touch" about it, and is well-used by the children, both for creative play and as a story-telling corner.

6.10.8 The Head makes a policy of ensuring that all his teachers enjoy the presence of another qualified adult at some time every day,

to allow them to team-teach and/or concentrate on children with learning difficulties or linguistic problems. This he achieves (and budgets for) in a variety of ways, some less conventional than others - utilisation of infant teachers' afternoon preparation time, of his own time, of final year students from the Training College, of qualified parents etc. Teachers view this not as a luxury but as an essential condition of service in a Welsh-medium environment where not many children have linguistic back-up in the home. It also permits teachers in the infant years to take part in the programme of structural (grammatical) language teaching which is the back-bone of the school's linguistic syllabus for L2 Welsh beginners. The Head "eats, sleeps and dreams grammatical structures. Wakes up during the night wondering whether P1 have mastered the Past Continuous yet".

6.10.9 He is fully aware that in pursuance of an underlying formal structural syllabus, taught through audio-lingual methods in small groups extracted from the classroom, he is flying in the face of current linguistic and pedagogic fashion. He remains unrepentant, believing that his children do not have enough linguistic extra-mural experience to ensure full grasp of every structure which would "come naturally" to children reared bilingually from birth. It is the school's duty to ensure that they are presented with the full range of grammar as early as possible and as thoroughly as possible, and that they are taught in a way which is enjoyable and fills them with a sense of achievement. He is scathing about educationists from other parts of Wales who "think that language will just fall down out of the

sky. It's not true in the heartland any more - how much less so in Cardiff".

6.10.10 I was present at one such lesson. A small group of P 1 children was extracted from their Friday afternoon activities, for my benefit and despite my protests (they seemed happily and profitably engaged). They were positioned around the "remedial room" and put through a series of questions and answers, during which the HT mesmerised them into making correct whole-sentence responses (he mouthing the responses in stage whisper to assist each child):

6.10.11 "Where is Anne? Anne is by the table. Is John by the table? No John is at the door. And what about Mary? Is Mary sitting on the chair? Yes, she is sitting on the chair. Is Gwen sitting on a chair too? No, Gwen is standing by the black-board...."

6.10.12 During this process the children were completely relaxed and obviously keen to please their trusted, charismatic but eccentric Headteacher who could not tell a black-board from a chair. I came away convinced only that the Head's love for and commitment to his children have, over the years, created a happy, successful school with loyal staff and bright cooperative (bilingual) pupils, who would, one suspects, have stood on their heads for him had he asked. It is impossible to assess the effect (if any) of these grammar sessions on the children's progress towards bilingualism, but they seem to give the staff a sense of direction, they ensure that even the shyest child gains practice in articulating Welsh sounds each day (with "affective

filter" apparently little disturbed by the exercise) and, most importantly, the rest of their school experience is rich and interesting and full of opportunities to acquire and produce Welsh.

## 7. Summary and Conclusions

7.1 There are as many different linguistic circumstances in Wales as there are in Scotland - from heartland areas with high proportions of active native-speakers to city areas with little or no overt acknowledgement of Welsh language and culture. The response of each individual Authority is similarly varied, though the Government's pledge to make Welsh available to the 80% non-Welsh speaking population promises to focus thinking on future policy. However there is no doubt that some counties will be forced, either through lack of finance and staff or through majority disinterest, to interpret these initiatives through adopting the least radical approach possible - provision of peripatetic subject-teachers serving wide catchments or, in the last extreme, opting out of Welsh provision.

7.2 The language-base in Wales, though considerably stronger than Gaelic in Scotland, is under even greater threat from English "immigration", and the Welsh heartland is far more vulnerable geographically than the Scottish Gaidhealtachd. Welsh-medium education has been offered for far longer than Gaelic-medium education in Scotland. However Scotland benefits from Welsh experience, can avoid some of the less successful elements of their experimental period, and has in a very short time moved into most of the areas in which they have shown the way - resource development, publishing, INSET etc, and especially cross-Regional cooperation - an area in which Scotland has made speedy progress, assisted and encouraged by the scheme for Specific Grants for Gaelic (3.1, above).

7.3 Welsh-medium initiatives have suffered the drawback of coinciding, over the last 25 years, with a period of intense debate and change in pedagogy and school organisation, which has to some extent clouded the issue. Reactionary staff and parental influence have, one suspects, conspired at times to create, in some Welsh-medium situations, a legitimised retention of more formal, traditionalist methodology catering for pupils from more supportive, middle-class backgrounds - former "grammar-school" material.

7.4 The challenge of denying this charge has, so far, been taken up only in Gwynedd, where all primary children are educated bilingually; conversely the confusion of aims and objectives in the Cardiff Bilingual Units demonstrates how "non-selective" Welsh provision can fail if unsupported by clear-cut official policy and on-going advice.

7.5 While it is helpful to extract as much as possible from the experience of the Welsh, rejecting nothing as irrelevant, it is certainly unhelpful to promote a Scottish self-image of the Page stepping along in King Wenceslas' goodly foot-prints but never catching up. Simply, the circumstances are very different. The Scots have entered the game at a time when methodological and technical understanding is more advanced, but numbers considerably more depleted, than were those of the Welsh when they began their experiment in cultural regeneration. Appreciation of this paradox seems essential in processing information from Wales - and in developing a pool of common expertise and mutual support.

#### APPENDIX FOUR STUDY VISIT TO NORTHERN IRELAND

##### *A Report*

*"I have known peace that is calm as a river, a peace that the sons of this world never knew, and do you know what my prayer is? That you'll get peace today"*

*(Rev. Ian Paisley, quoted Uris, 1982: 134)*

## 1. Introduction

1.1 The following Report describes a four-day study visit to Northern Ireland undertaken 11th - 15th April 1989 in order to investigate the position of Gaelic-medium education in the Province.

1.2 Census forms in Northern Ireland include no question on language. It has been estimated that about 30,000 people in Northern Ireland might claim a "working knowledge" of Irish (though a census might elicit double this response, as loyalty to the language is an integral part of the separatist struggle); 15,000 of these would probably claim to use the language socially, in preference to English; only about 2,000 are thought to be "native-born" Irish speakers (de Wapier, 1988). Although Irish is taught in secondary schools in the Gaidhealtachd areas, there are only two mainstream primary schools where Irish is used as a medium of education - one in Belfast (an all-Irish school) and one in Derry (an Irish "stream" or Unit) (ibid). I visited both of these with the cooperation and assistance of the Gaelic-speaking Inspector of Schools, and was also enabled to visit a small, recently established Irish school in Belfast, as yet far "beyond the Pale" of the official system and, as it appears at present, unlikely to achieve recognition.

1.3 Additionally I saw three Irish nursery classes in action (one in Belfast, two in Derry), met with a 'voluntary language and culture coordinating group, and spent an afternoon in St Mary's R.C. Teacher Training College, Belfast.



1.4 Superficially, the circumstances in which Irish-medium education is being pursued in Northern Ireland seem to form an ideal comparison with urban Gaelic Units in Scotland: indigenous minority language-maintenance programmes operating within the majority anglophone United Kingdom education system, under the direct control of local semi-devolved administrations, there are many points of common reference. Yet, as I discovered during this brief and emotionally-charged visit, the situation in Northern Ireland beggars meaningful comparison. From an educational point of view the Province is in a time-warp - still operating an 11+ examination at the end of the primary stage, which compounds the divisions already existing. Thus children, sharply divided as Catholic and Protestant, are sub-divided into "grammar school material" and "high school material" and, finally, segregated according to their sex. The non-denominational schools (i.e. Protestant) are entirely state-funded, while Catholic schools are 80% - 85% "grant-aided" or "maintained" - run by Church-dominated management committees who regard "paying the difference" as a means of retaining control over internal school policy. Most Catholic school teachers have some knowledge of Irish - no Protestant school teachers are likely to have had any opportunity to learn it (ibid). Thus from a political point of view the education system both reflects and perpetuates "tribal barriers" (ibid: 4) which date from the colonisation of the Province, and the indigenous culture is buffeted about as the symbolic flagship of one extremist faction, anathema to the other. The liberal integrationist philosophy flounders uneasily between the polarities, struggling to cultivate an acceptable middle ground in which languages, cultures, religions might co-exist in peace, but this seems unlikely to happen unless one faction accedes to the political desires of the other:

full democratic integration into the UK party political mechanism, or separation from the UK and full democratic integration into the Irish Republic.

1.6 The Gaelic-speaking Schools Inspector who assisted me in this visit plays a unique rôle, mediatory and developmental. His influence has halted the system whereby Irish-medium educated children were assessed through the medium of English: he translates the 11+ examination into Gaelic and marks the examination papers. He is now urgently turning his attention to the situation of these children when they enter the secondary school: here not only are they educated entirely through English, but also - fluent Irish speakers - they share the Irish (subject) class with complete learners: this breeds boredom and may have negative effects upon children whose primary education has been geared to nurturing positive attitudes towards Gaelic and Irish culture.

1.7 I was treated with unfailing kindness and hospitality throughout my stay, felt culturally, linguistically and psychologically "at home" with the gentle people whom I met wherever I went - a palpable sense of kinship not felt in Wales; yet the expression "Scottish" is common slang-usage among these cultural first cousins, casually used to describe Protestant-extremist bigotry; and memories of bright, cooperative, bilingual children grow pale beside the image of soldiers leaning their rifles across the bonnet of an armoured vehicle on the road that runs alongside the school play-ground.

## 2. Bunscoil Phobal Feirste

2.1 Background Bunscoil Phobal Feirste was established as an independent Gaelic-medium primary school in 1971. Its birth came about in answer to the educational needs of a small group of Irish Gaelic learner-enthusiasts who had established a wholly Irish speaking colony in a street off the Falls Road in Belfast. Having built their own houses and produced their first Irish-speaking children, they were loath to lose their investment to the English-medium education system. Their request for permission to establish an Irish-medium alternative (on a piece of adjacent ground bought for a few thousand pounds) was rejected summarily; they began building their premises under threat of a court order. Nothing daunted, the first class commenced in "temporary accommodation" with five children and one teacher, paid entirely through school fees and fund-raising. The school has expanded rapidly ever since, utilising the same hand-built "temporary accommodation" and building more of the same to cope with growing numbers of children from all over Belfast. Today the school is accepted as part of mainstream grant-aided ("maintained") provision: it earns an 85% grant, parents pay a nominal stipend (£100 per annum) and the difference is raised by the management committee. Historically, as the Headteacher says, "parents have half a million pounds of their own money invested in this school".

2.2 Administration Nowadays there are almost 400 pupils in the school (including the 2-year nursery department, which caters for two groups of infants per morning, another two per evening: thus around a hundred children pass through its doors every day). The Head suggests that this

rapid expansion is the result of "a new need for cultural identity in Belfast. The children's names are put down for the nursery at conception!" It has been impossible for the bunscoil to keep up with the demand, and a second bunscoil has been established - as yet operating outwith the mainstream system and hoping for official recognition and financial support in future (cf 3.1, below)

**2.3 Religious policy** In principle, though its management committee is controlled by the Roman Catholic Church, the Bunscoil is open to children of any religious denomination to attend. The Headteacher is in sympathy with much of the thinking behind the Government's EMU Project ("Education for Mutual Understanding") but suggests it may be hard to operate in practice. The proprietary interest shown towards Gaelic education by external political agencies is a source of embarrassment to staff, whose priorities are educational and whose belief in the value of Gaelic language and culture for all Irish children knows no religious, ethnic, social or political bounds. Yet attendant army presence and slogan-painted walls in the streets outside the school bear constant witness to the extent to which the language has been harnessed to the separatist politico-religious struggle, and internment has proved a rich breeding-ground for Gaelic L2 learners. In practice the children in the Bunscoil are Roman Catholic.

**2.4 Teacher training** There is no specialist pre-service training for Gaelic-medium teachers in Northern Ireland. Indeed many of the staff are secondary trained Irish subject-teachers (cf 4.1, below). However the school has evolved its own "on-site" training procedures, utilising the

inherent strengths of an overwhelmingly young and enthusiastic staff, supplemented by all available in-service courses, which teachers attend turn and turn about and disseminate new skills and ideas among the rest of the staff.

**2.5 Educational resources** Although there are Irish bilingual materials available from south of the border, few of these are felt by staff to be relevant to their needs (in terms of content, lexis, linguistic level and dialectal variation, etc) - though more accessible in the widest sense since the virtual abandonment of traditional Irish script, and the relaxation of use of Munster Irish as an "academic lingua franca". By and large, however, the materials (reading-schemes etc) produced by the Southern Irish Gaelscoileanna are felt to reflect relatively outmoded methodology; thus staff at all primary stages are forced to produce almost all their own resources, with the voluntary help of parents. (As the Headteacher remarked "the parents are so enthusiastic that it keeps the teachers bouyant").

**2.6 Linguistic policy** Irish is used as the sole medium of education until the end of P3 when the children "slip into English reading quite readily". Immersion begins in the nursery, and is considered to be a vital part of the process; nevertheless, children typically do not begin to produce whole sentences until the end of Primary 1 (i.e. three years after entering the nursery). A working-group set up to assess reading skills found the children to be about a year and a half below average in English reading at the end of primary four; by P7 they are of an equal (or higher) standard to children educated through the medium of English. Indeed, the school has had

a consistent 100% success rate in the 11+ examination - even when this was administered through English - a remarkable achievement, considering that most classes are large (25+) and the children in no way equivalent to the ambitious middle-class pupils who typify the urban Welsh-medium school population almost all families are of low economic status, almost all children have free meals Indeed some come from homes with social problems undreamt of in our Scottish Gaelic situation

2.7 As regards their progress in Irish literacy, the children seem to reach and maintain a certain level around P5 - beyond which it is difficult for them to progress in the total absence of Irish literature, television programmes, etc Many of the children attend Irish after-school sports clubs, but in general the classroom is the language's sole domain Parents are encouraged to learn Gaelic, but the children "leave them behind after P2." The party political structure in Northern Ireland is such that it is impossible to gain official support at national level for development of any kind, and the local primary adviser is non-Irish speaking In this situation the Irish-speaking HMI is welcomed into the classroom as a friend and source of assistance

2.8 The school is remarkable in many ways - not the least being the demeanour of its pupils. The Headteacher attributes this to the origins of the school as a "real family unit" which has grown without losing its ethos They are on first-name terms with all staff, including the Headteacher, and the older children are self-confident without seeming precocious. To a visiting stranger it comes across as a rare blend of good manners and genuine interest - hard to define, unselfconsciously they ask

questions, compare notes on their lives and mine; matter-of-factly display their considerable talents as dancers, singers, whistle players; listen to my Gaelic songs and find Irish parallels; talk as equal to respected equal. It is unthinkable that these children live daily with urban guerilla warfare; that many of their fathers are in prison; that some will not survive into adulthood. It is beyond belief that to the outside world this school symbolises one side of extremism and violence:

2.8.1 "Cairns greets with optimism the integrated school movement but notes that the existence of Bunscoil on the one hand and the foundation of schools by fundamentalist religious groups on the other does not bode well for the future" (Linen Hall Review, 4.3, 1987)

2.9 **Transfer to secondary** Boys and girls attend separate secondary schools. At the school to which the girls from the Bunscoil will proceed the uptake of Gaelic is discouraged as "something you can take up later". In the boys' school, the Bunscoil boys share the Gaelic class with complete language beginners: as their numbers have been relatively small no special arrangements have been made for them, though the school has of late begun to consider possible alternatives - such as bringing together boys of "native speaker" ability from grammar school and nearby high school (= "secondary modern") on a consortium basis to form one combined class. Meantime the Bunscoil boys have sat at the back of the Irish class and "twiddled their thumbs for two years".

### 3. Gaelscoil na bhFál

3.1 Gaelscoil na bhFál ("*the Falls Gaelic School*") has emerged from a number of factors:

3.1.1 lack of accommodation in the Bunscoil (3.1, above)

3.1.2 the work of Glór na nGael ("*the speech of the Gaels*") an independent voluntary group formed as an umbrella organisation to coordinate Irish promotional activity, and dedicated especially to the formation of Irish-medium nursery groups

3.1.3 community-based self-help effort, particularly aimed at providing Gaelic education for the working-class, women, the unemployed, the aged etc

3.2 Situated in the Conway Mill - a disused factory building in a state of ill-repair - the primary school and play-group are conducted in conditions at present ill-lit, ill-stocked and depressing. The dedicated, highly professional young teacher's ability to transform this into a rewarding learning experience for her class is, again, remarkable. She moves calmly among broken-down furniture and cardboard boxes of cast-off toys as if in a custom-built open-plan classroom.

3.3 The local people are converting the premises bit by bit into a community centre - so far a pleasant and well-stocked Irish bookshop has been fully completed; there are offices, common room, indoor sports



facilities etc planned - and already in different stages of completion - in addition to the school. In the Gaelscoil there are sixteen P1 children and one teacher, whose salary is literally paid from collecting-tins. The school could double, or even treble, immediately - if funds were available to pay for a second teacher and more resources. Yet what little official funding the school was able to attract in the past has been withdrawn - ostensibly on the grounds that the premises are unsuitable (i.e. on the third floor). It seems, however, that the reasons may be political. It was pointed out that "the community" in this instance means "everybody", and "everybody" inevitably has its more as well as its less extreme components. The situation is so delicate in Belfast that the Irish play-group mothers (one of the most articulate of whom is an English Jewess) cannot argue for the rights of *all* Irish children to learn the indigenous language without on the one hand being accused of fostering societal dichotomies by those who argue for "integration", and, on the other, losing the support of many parents who want an Irish *and* Catholic education for their children.

3.4 The future of this school seems very uncertain, like the 18th century Irish "hedge schools" which give its name particular resonance (Atkinson, 1969: 45 - 48): "fál" - from which the Falls Road derives its name - is Gaelic for "hedge": thus Gaelscoil na bhFál is, literally, "the Gaelic hedge-school". At present there seems little hope of the parents' continuing battle to win official validation and support coming to fruition. But, as one sees the enormous physical efforts being made to convert this unpromising building, it seems just possible that some other research project may say - in fifteen years time - "Nowadays Gaelscoil na

bhFai contains almost 400 children. Originally established in the 1980's in a huge disused factory mill...."

#### 4. Pre-school

4.1 In Scotland the emergence of vibrant younger activist organisations like CNSA (the Gaelic Play-group Association) has thrown a rather unkind light upon some valuable longer-established associations with more overtly "artistic" or social function. It seems Scotland is not alone in this. The Irish cultural-maintenance organisation *Conradh na Gaeilge* was severally described to me as "moribund", "male-dominated", "treating Irish as a dead language" and "out of touch with the needs of ordinary people". The "ordinary people", it seems, as in Scotland, want adult Gaelic classes, pre-school play-groups, Gaelic-medium primary schools.

4.2 While in Scotland we have the government-funded *Comunn na Gàidhlig* to coordinate and service Gaelic educational initiatives and liaise between voluntary organisations and the fast-developing official mechanisms, Northern Ireland is not so fortunate. However funding has been found from Community Education sources to establish *Glór na nGael* - operating from an office above a butcher's shop on the Falls Road - which has in a short space of time organised a peripatetic "crash course" in the Irish language, geared mostly towards home-bound mothers, and established nine nursery classes (*níscoileanna*) supplying each with one or two play-leaders - in addition to coordinating other voluntary effort and lobbying the Education Committee for recognition of Irish-medium education within the official system.

4.3 Again, it is poignant to find developmental work of this kind - which in Scotland may be seen as, at worst, mildly eccentric, but certainly not

malign - tiptoeing in Northern Ireland across mine-fields of misinterpretation, sensitivity and prejudice. While Gaelic activists in Scotland can cheerfully play the political system at its own game, and call on support from all parties, all religious denominations, in Northern Ireland "party politics" is unionism versus separatism and an organisation like Comunn na Gàidhlig seems as exotic for having a priest and a Church of Scotland minister as its Chair and Vice-chair respectively as for its SED funding.

## 5. St Mary's R.C. Teacher Training College

5.1 The Gaelic Department in St Mary's College has three full-time lecturing staff and is the source of all teachers of Gaelic as a subject in Northern Ireland and of some who become Gaelic-medium primary teachers. Primary teachers, as in Scotland, are trained through the medium of English, but may take Irish as an option. All secondary school teachers must have a recognised Post-graduate Certificate in Education from a Northern Irish college, and this qualifies them to teach in the primary sector if they so choose; meanwhile Gaelic-speaking primary teachers trained in Eire are not qualified to teach in Northern Ireland. As is indicated by the retention of the 11+ examination, a somewhat more "academic" emphasis seems to have prevailed in the approach to education generally, certainly at the upper primary level, which may apply particularly to Irish-medium education with the almost inevitable presence of a certain proportion of secondary-trained Irish subject teachers.

5.2 The College Gaelic staff share many of the preoccupations of their counterparts in Scottish training establishments. The status of Irish after the introduction of compulsory Modern European Language teaching has been successfully championed in Northern Ireland, and St Mary's College staff have played a vital rôle in this process, producing a strongly-worded and well-argued pamphlet in defence of the language in secondary schools (McKendry, 21.3.89). The Education Minister's original intentions were to compartmentalise the language as an additional option, as is presently being proposed for Scottish Gaelic (Northern Ireland Information Service, 6.10.88). Six months later Dr Mawhinney announced that "Children in

Northern Ireland will be able to learn Irish as their one compulsory language in the national curriculum planned for the Province" (London "Times", 29.3.89) albeit with a bad grace:

5.2.1 "Parents who choose to have their children take Irish instead of one of (the main European languages) when the importance of the European dimension is growing, should think carefully about the future possible consequences of such a decision" (ibid).

5.3 Again, it seems ironic that the future of Irish at secondary level seems much more stable than that of Gaelic in Scotland, while its position Northern Irish primary schools is so much less securely supported by the official system.

## 6. Derry

6.1 Background It seems historically fitting that Derry, in the West of Northern Ireland, should have followed Belfast's lead in establishing Irish-medium pre-school and primary school education programmes - as the site of the first of St Columba's Irish foundations (c. 545 A.D.) from which Celtic education evolved, grew, and spread its influence to Scotland (Atkinson, op cit: 10).

6.2 Steelstown Voluntary Assisted School This is a maintained (i.e. Roman Catholic) primary school - a bright, modern building situated on the side of a hill within a well-maintained residential area of the city. In the early 1980s a group of parents (of whom three were teachers) conducted a well-orchestrated, well-argued campaign for the provision of Irish-medium primary education: the result was the establishment of a bilingual stream within the school.

6.3 The "unit" began in 1983, with one teacher and a composite P1 - 3 class of twenty children, of whom six had fairly good spoken Irish. They came from all over the city, and initially transport was a problem. Several compromise arrangements were tried out (use of the local grammar school bus and a mini-bus bought by the parents) before official provision was finally granted after, as the Headteacher put it, "serious pressure from parents". There are now over eighty children in the Unit and four teachers.

6.4 Organisation is as follows:

6.4.1 P1: 20+ children

P2: 18 children

P3/4: 20+ children

P5/6/7: 27 children

6.5 This is highly reminiscent of the growth-rate of Gaelic Unit in Sir John Maxwell Primary in Glasgow.

6.6 Parental involvement here seems to have been much more similar to the Scottish situation also - Derry has its own share of political problems, but the parents (with their educated, middle-class vanguard) "made" as the Headteacher says "all the right noises to all the right people in all the right places". Their progression seems to have been well-researched: from winning the sympathy of the Roman Catholic Bishop who is the school's chief trustee to a meeting with the Minister for Education, they employed rational arguments based on the educational and cultural needs of their children, drawing upon experience from Wales and the Western Isles to demonstrate the advantages of bilingual education. The Headteacher is an older man, heavily involved in Union work. With backing from the Minister, the Headteacher and parents approached senior officials in the Education Department. Initial delaying tactics on the part of officialdom seem to have stemmed from genuine practical administrative rather than philosophical uncertainties: staffing quotas in the school hung in the balance, with the introduction of the proposed stream raising the possibility of redundancies and swollen classes in one sector while staff was employed to teach smaller classes, in the new sector - it is a common problem and one which can prejudice staff attitudes from the start.



6.7 Eventually however these problems were deferred and today most of the staff in the established school are sympathetic to the Unit. However there are still some tensions in the staff-room regarding the use of Irish among Gaelic-speaking staff. One teacher has been, and remains, openly antagonistic towards the whole exercise, despite the commitment of the Headteacher. However it may be that this commitment is more operative at the level of educational politics than at the grassroots, classroom level: certainly his activities take him often away from the school.

6.8 Steelstown teachers have experienced the same problems as their Belfast colleagues as regards teacher training and resources, and have overcome them in much the same way. There is school-based in-service for secondary-trained teachers, on the recommendation and with the assistance of the HMI. There is a palpably less "Irish" ethos in the Unit than in the Belfast Bunscoil, and the children are under the same pressure here to speak English in the play-ground as they are in Glasgow or Edinburgh. Length of initial immersion is based on the Welsh model, but in general the teaching seems less communicative, less creative, more controlled. I watched a class of six-year olds performing a playlet ("The Little Red Hen") with the assistance of an older boy (obviously the Unit's "star Irish speaker") "roped in" to act as narrator. This seemed fairly typical of the Unit - classes were, in general, less relaxed, more highly prepared with "a party piece for the visitor" than in Belfast and I was given little chance to obtain an impression of the children at work or to assess their communicative ability. There are pressures later in the school to apply an even more formal approach: preparation for (a) church confirmation and (b)

the 11+ take up a great deal of teaching time and shape the teaching methods.

6.9 Transfer to secondary Numbers of children so far have been so small (especially when divided up as per sex and ability) that there has been no question of a lobby for Irish-medium facilities at secondary level. The only suggestion which has emerged thus far is that children from the Unit might be permitted to sit their GCSE Irish examinations sooner than other pupils.

6.7 Pre-school I visited two of the city's Gaelic play-groups, situated in large Catholic housing estates - the Creggans and Bogside respectively. Both have some financial assistance as community development projects. Although similar in their aims they seemed to differ in terms of the commitment of the local community: the group in the Creggan Estate is sited in a building constructed entirely by local effort (6.8, below) while in the Bogside the níscoil is run in a local community centre. The former was well-attended by parents, who obviously use the premises as a pleasant and vital communal meeting-point, while the latter was run by a development officer, remitted to setting up play-groups in different communities, and one helper - parents were noticeable for their absence. In the Bogside, the premises are shared, and apparatus has to be stored at the end of every session: it is difficult to achieve a conducive atmosphere under such conditions.

6.8 Níscoil na Rinne The Creggans Irish play-group is run as part of a wider community project: the Ring Community Association. Established in 1984, the Association has been successful in attracting funding from various Trusts and from Derry City Council, which it uses to run Irish adult language classes and cultural pursuits, and it has ambitious plans for furthering these: audio-visual Irish-medium promotional presentations; workshops in Irish dance, drama, art and music; Gaelic-medium Theatre in Education; publishing; an adventure play-park - these are among its proposed developments for the future (Creggan Cultural Research and Development Project, n.d.). It has serious cause to continue to press for

such enrichment, especially to meet the needs of children in after-school hours:

6.8.1 "This is particularly important in an area such as Creggan which has witnessed some of the worst political and civil unrest in this country. Some of the children in this estate have not been immuned to the effects of violence and unrest and many know little of a normal life. We would hope to promote a range of activities which may help to bring a sense of normality to children facing and enduring an abnormal situation" (ibid).

6.9 The play-group building was constructed from a derelict block of high-rise flats being demolished by the local council. Parents asked for the demolition to be halted at ground-floor level, and then constructed the existent building around and within this truncated husk. It has only one room, and therefore cannot accommodate as many children as the community would like (there is a long waiting-list). However it is singularly warm, bright and inviting. It is run on an entirely voluntary basis: the full-time play-leader has been with the group since the outset (six years) during which time she has been paid on an expenses-only basis. The children hear only Irish - their play seems well-organised and they are well-off for resources. The sense of local pride in the building is quite tangible: parents tell me that they have had visitors from all over the world - academics, community workers, even the Minister of State for Education himself. They feel it has given the community self-confidence and morale

when it was most needed.

6.10 "You can tell how much it means to the local people, this place" one mother says. "Look at all the other buildings round about. Covered in graffiti. Look at our building - our play-ground. No graffiti. We've never had any trouble in all this time since we got started. No graffiti or anything like that. Of course there was the bomb, but never any graffiti".

6.11 Regretfully I leave the cheerful mothers with their dish-towels and their promotion leaflets, the unemployed fathers with their hammers and fuse-wire, the little children absorbed in their play and unimpressed by visitors from other lands; I ask no questions about "the bomb". That way lies madness.

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## APPENDIX FIVE

### THE PARENTS' PERSPECTIVE

*(Transcript of a speech delivered to Conference on Bilingual Primary  
Education, December, 1987, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Sleat, Skye)*

1. I might have worn several different hats today. I might have addressed you as the patron of Comhairle nan Sgoiltean Araich, and talked about the enormous debt Gaelic education owes to that organisation - since its inception it has demonstrated the efficacy of Gaelic play-groups in providing the stimulus, parental confidence and cooperative effort necessary to lobby for the continuation of the Gaelic-medium process into the primary school and beyond: we had heard about this from the Welsh - now we have proved it for ourselves, in Glasgow, Inverness, Skye, Lewis, Uist, Edinburgh....

2. I might have worn my activist's hat: representing CNSA I became a committee-member of the original group - members of city Associations, educationists, businessmen and parents - which became Comann Sgoiltean Dàchànanach Ghlaschu and successfully approached Strathclyde Regional Council with the request that Gaelic-medium primary education be provided in Greater Glasgow. Although we had the research of Seumas Grant to back us up and prove that the desire for this type of schooling existed in good measure among parents, it was an uphill struggle to convince the authorities that the figures were authentic, and that we were anything but a Machiavellian (and - even worse in Labour Strathclyde - middle-class) pressure-group sent to try them in "times of economic stringency" and representing the dark underworld of "Gaelic politics" rather than real live parents with real live children and a 'real live language and cultural needs. But when they finally agreed to countenance us (albeit on an experimental basis) things happened with a speed which left us all

breathless, and I found myself suddenly wearing another hat - but I'll come to that in a minute.

3. I could have spoken to you as a primary school teacher with some experience of bilingual education. Throughout the skirmishes with Strathclyde I felt my own knowledge of primary education to be rusty and my experience of bilingual education second-hand. I was a secondary teacher "away back when". I was fortunate in having trained in London in the sixties, when child-centred learning was the *sine qua non* in the new comprehensive education scenario, and then worked in an enormous de-streamed Oxfordshire school which was the very model of all the theories put into practice - I taught something they called "The Humanities" - English, History and Geography all integrated within topics, projects, centres of interest - call them what you will - and only separated out into subject areas for end-of-session exams, largely to satisfy the respective Heads of Department, all of whom dated from the old grammar-school around which the new comprehensive had blossomed. We did regular staff exchanges with teachers in the related primary-schools, and all this, along with some antediluvian uncertificated work, gave me a fairly good grasp of primary methods. But in 1985? In Scotland? In Gaelic....?

4. So I took myself off to Jordanhill College to be "converted" into a primary-school teacher, the better to keep my end up whatever might betide: making resources if asked, filling a post if necessary, supply teaching if required, arguing if cornered. And I put "an ceòl air feadh na fìdhle" by requesting that my School Experience should be undertaken in Sir John Maxwell Primary (the school designated for the "Gaelic Bilingual experiment") and that a substantial part of it should be through the medium of Gaelic. For I was only too aware of the complete lack of training facilities for bilingual and Gaelic medium teachers, and hoped that my example might give a bit of impetus to Boyd Robertson's efforts to right that obvious flaw. I am sure my non-Gaelic speaking tutor was as nervous as his student - at first. But we both became quickly convinced of the enormous potential both of the children (to absorb a new language and accept unfamiliar terms of reference) and of the new medium (to widen the dimensions of teacher and taught and to dust away some of the less imaginative results of the old dependencies on resources and methodology). On the other hand I also became only too aware of the difficulties faced by teachers in a world without any specific training or resources at all - but again, all this is another story too, and Boyd and the teachers are here to tell it.

5. I might just add, though, that I then stayed on to teach in the "non-Gaelic" part of the school for two terms<sup>1</sup>, and this provided on the one hand a useful link and channel of communication between the host-school (understandably suspicious of this new cuckoo in its nest) and the Gaelic Unit; on the other a fly-on-the-wall's eye view of the difficulties which

are bound to arise in the context of a unit-within-a-school unless the parameters are clearly defined and the needs and feelings of all sides (teachers, parents and children in both sections of the school) taken account of most carefully. More of that anon, under today's hat!

6. Lastly, I might have donned the cap of the mature student that I now am, for I am doing part-time research at Glasgow University into "Bilingual and Gaelic-medium primary education in an urban setting". For my observations during the previous months had proved to me the lack of existent knowledge upon which to base our specific Scottish Gaelic experiments and plan for the future. The Western Isles Bilingual Project is one invaluable source - but the development of Gaelic-medium education in the cities poses many questions which its pioneers cannot answer: will reading-material developed for the rural communities be relevant to the city-based child's experience? How will children fare who are not so fortunate as to live in a community where Gaelic is still in daily use? How can one provide a sense of unity and belonging among families so widely scattered? A sense of cultural identity among the high-rise flats and housing-schemes? What will be the effects of depriving children of daily schooling alongside their community friends? Will religious differences make difficulties undreamt of in integrated rural communities? How will the Gaelic language itself fare if exposed to sustained use in contexts so foreign to its own origins? Are urban women more likely to be out at work, less committed to full-time motherhood? Are there more single-parent families, less extended family support? One day I hope to be able to put some of the answers in a useful and accessible form. But not yet. And certainly not today - in today's hat!

7. For today's hat is that of a parent, and today's story is essentially subjective. I have three children, and two of them are at the Gaelic Unit in Glasgow - Marsaili aged eleven (primary 7) and Rachel aged eight (primary 4). My son, Robbie, is in secondary, and has sadly missed out on all the recent developments, both pre-school and primary.

8. And as today's story is by its very nature subjective it will not be helpful if anyone here thinks of me as an entirely non-representative parent: reasonably well-off, (famous even, in yet another hat!), part of a family of at least two generations of out-and-out Gaelic freaks on both sides - "how could she be expected to understand our fears and our qualms, the difficulties we have bringing up our children bilingually, committing their future to a form of education which might be detrimental to their long-term development for all we know?" Well, a mother is a mother is a mother. Oh I blithely filled in Seumas Grant's form: of course I would be willing to send my children to an all-Gaelic school. It won't happen anyway, will it? I willingly put my oar in with Strathclyde: I am a parent, I want a Gaelic school, I am entitled to a Gaelic school, the Gaels have been discriminated against within their own country of origin for long enough, the Welsh have done it, the Irish have done it, what's wrong with the Scots? They won't give us one anyway, will they?

9. But when the moment comes and you are suddenly looking at unfamiliar (and none too inviting) premises, telling your children that they are to transfer schools, yet again, after the summer, telling yourself that Marsaili has only just stopped missing her last school but not sucking her little thumb, that Rachel has only just settled into Primary One and is

reading well in English and making friends with the local children, that your work makes it hard for either parent always to be around when they need you let alone to speak Gaelic to them all evening, that the baby-sitter is bilingual but that Urdu is not going to be much help in dealing with the Gaelic homework.... so what's happened to your Gaelic principles now?

10. In our specific situation in Glasgow we were offered a school in the centre of town - an urban waste-land behind the Bus Station, not near to any recognisable community let alone a Gaelic one, not within the vicinity of any of the families identified as providing potential pupils. Its one advantage that its roll was falling so sharply (no wonder! it looked like Colditz!) that soon we would be in a take-over situation: that's what you wanted isn't it? A school to yourselves? Oh yes. But think of our little peas rattling about in this enormous ugly drum. Think of the Primary Ones going out to those toilets. Think of families without cars coming away in here to collect children if they get sick during the day.... so where's your Highland resolve now? You want to consider other premises? But we understood that you were not motivated by any considerations other than Gaelic education - were willing to take any necessary risks with your children's education in order to achieve your dream - were not a middle-class pressure-group wanting a nice cushy school in a nice middle-class area? We weren't, we are, we aren't. But.....



11. In the end we landed in the south-side school my own children were attending. Not because they were attending it, I hasten to add, but because I happened to know that it then had a falling roll, lots of spare room, and a go-ahead head-teacher who had already welcomed a Gaelic play-group with open arms for just those reasons. Not to mention its situation within a working-class area not without its quota of social problems - Pollokshaws may not be Easterhouse, but it's certainly not Hyndland either!

12. It's hard to entrust your child to an entirely new school far from home even if it realises a long-held dream. To send the littlest ones off alone in a bus or taxi at eight o' clock in the morning while their protective big brothers and sisters lie abed longer before running round the corner to the local primary. To prise stories out of them when they come back exhausted at half past four (even Primary One) - and to try and understand what the teachers are doing with the children, because it's obvious that the big red bus is not going past the newspaper shop in Hill Street like it did when Mary was in Primary Two. All honour to the parents who did so, especially those who faced religious doubts as well, those who had no Gaelic-speaker on hand at home to help with the hand-made flash-cards, those whose families were split up between two and sometimes three different schools in the process.

13. We were the luckiest parents on all counts - but I have often wondered how our own children felt, trying to explain to their friends "downstairs" why they were leaving their respective classes to go to what was, and still is, known as "the Gaylic" to the Pollokshaws mums and dads. To some

parents there may be an initial sense of reassurance about a Gaelic unit housed within an established, functioning school with its own experienced English-medium staff, well-stocked English-medium resources, shared facilities. Clearly it has financial advantages for the authorities, and so encourages the spread of bilingual education to other areas. But the balance between "integration" within the host school and a clear cultural identity for the Gaelic section is a very fine one - and personally I am convinced that separate Gaelic primaries should remain the goal if our PTA notices are to be uncompromisingly bilingual, our assemblies (and Santa Clauses) to be firmly Gaelic-speaking, and our children ever to play together in Gaelic in the play-ground. If our teachers are to have their own staff-rooms where they can talk together in Gaelic without either upsetting the non-Gaels or appearing clannish, decide when to introduce English reading without deflection by enquiries as to "how far your lot are on in Ginn", hog the shared television because there are more Gaelic television programmes than there are Gaelic books, hog the gym because children learn a new language faster through doing than they do through listening.....

14. As long as your children are a minority in a shared school you will worry about their being picked upon the more "different" they appear to the majority, and of course their happiness will come first. Yet the school must provide every opportunity for Gaelic to be visible, audible, tangible, and encourage the children to identify with the culture which the Unit seeks to promote. Bringing the whole school together for "important occasions" is a fine stratagem to encourage integration, but disastrous for the minority language.

15. We have formed Comann nam Pàrant in order to give our parents and teachers the opportunity to discuss the special needs and aims of the special education provided within the Gaelic Unit, and to provide a meeting-point for widely scattered families and extensions of the school dimension into other areas, social, artistic, and so on. We would like to play our part in the Gaelic life of the city, introduce our non-Gaelic speaking parents to some elements of that life. We want to forge links with other Gaelic parent groups in other areas - to disseminate experience and allay isolation. All good aims, and, you would think, clearly justifiable. Yet we have found it hard to explain to the non-Gaelic parents of the school that our Association arises from the special nature of the Unit, and not from exclusivity: we exist in addition, not in opposition, to the school PTA; we are not plotting to give our children extra advantages not enjoyed by the rest of the school, while allowing them to enjoy the fruits of the PTA's fund-raising efforts as well; we are on the PTA too, some of us, and we all bake like fury, wash dishes in the servery, and desist from speaking Gaelic in the presence of non-Gaels because we know it annoys them.

16. I am saying all this to you today, not as a disloyal account of a miserable situation - because, so far from being miserable, our children are content at the school, their Gaelic is coming on apace, our Comann nam Pàrant meetings are marked for their merriment, and Strathclyde are to be congratulated for their support of our culture despite the "stringencies" and pressures under which they toil. (I was going to say "labour", but that would have been quite inappropriate! Our Unit is the direct result of applied Labour policy on Gaelic - and as parents we are becoming

politicians too - and fast!) Rather I feel it is important, if our experience is to be useful in future developments, that the potential pitfalls are there among the euphoria. And there is no doubt that autonomous Gaelic-medium or bilingual primaries would present many fewer problems of identity and communication.

17. But we now have seventy pupils and four teachers. Our primary 7 class is going up to secondary school next year, and the region have promised us a continuation of bilingual education, at least to some extent, at this level, and an entirely new Gaelic Department in the secondary with two teachers to cater for our eight pupils, no loss of French to enable the teaching of Gaelic..... Who could possibly have foreseen all this four years ago? And so I hope that you will gain nothing but hope and encouragement from my subjective Glasgow story.

18. My son was a fluent, and irrepressible Gaelic speaker at the age of three. At four he went to the local English-speaking nursery school. At fifteen he is one of the many who "understand some but don't speak it at all". But he is doing well in French, German, Latin and Greek at his school and we have no reason to suppose he will not relearn his Gaelic with ease when the time seems right for him. But his loss is great, and he certainly feels it now, though it meant nothing to him when all his primary school pals spoke English, even though Mum and Dad were speaking Gaelic to the baby. That is the negative side of the argument for biligual education.

19. But I'd like to finish with the positive side. There is nothing in the world to beat the thrill of hearing your child speaking Gaelic - not to a Mod adjudicator, or to the teacher, or to a radio interviewer, or even to you, as a duty at Sunday dinner, or to charm you into making an unscheduled hand-out when the pocket-money's finished. But when you overhear them inadvertently - on the phone to Uncle Momo, perhaps, or teaching a class of Barbie dolls and teddy-bears, or - most precious of all - talking together about things that matter to them. That's when all your doubts (from resources, reading-schemes and multiple fractions to PTA's, staff-training and O-grade exam papers) go winging out the window. As a fellow parent I cannot recommend it too highly to you. And I can't see how it can be achieved without continued development of bilingual, or ideally, Gaelic-medium education. And that will not be achieved without the initial demand from the parents. They have to listen to us. That's what we have learned lately, after all the years of hanging back and not liking to push ourselves forward. We parents now have more power at our disposal than all the official language promotion agencies put together. Let's use it!

